

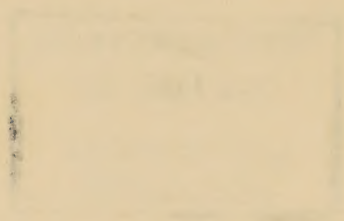
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POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
ROBERT BRIDGES

UNIFORM EDITION  
OF  
ROBERT BRIDGES'  
POETICAL WORKS

*In Seven Volumes, Small Post 8vo, 6s. each.*

CONTENTS

VOLUME I: Prometheus the Firegiver—Eros and Psyche—The Growth of Love—Notes.

VOLUME II: Shorter Poems—New Poems—Notes.

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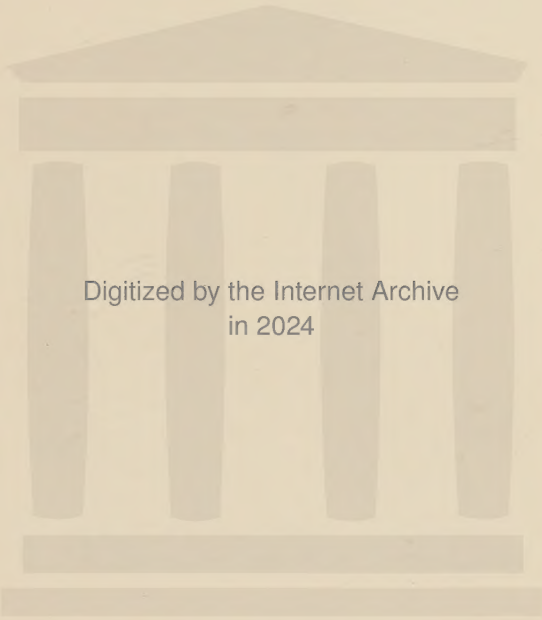
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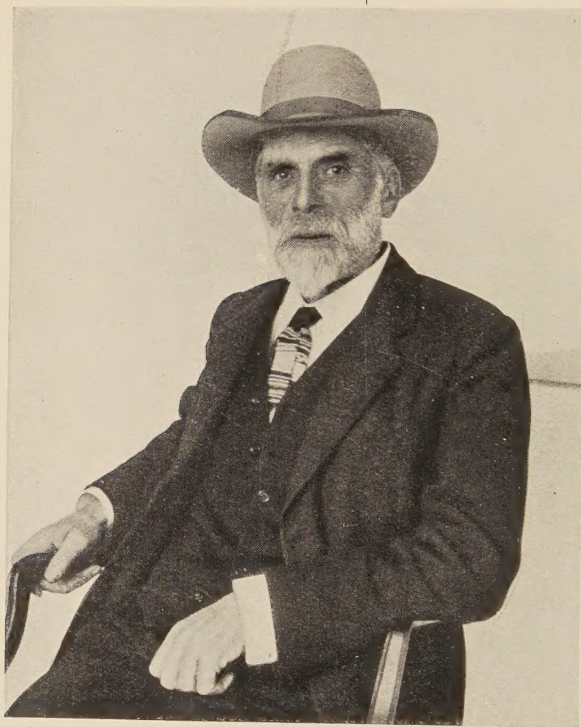
\* \* \* This volume completes the Uniform Edition of  
Mr. Robert Bridges' Works.

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Robert Bridges  
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POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
ROBERT BRIDGES

EXCLUDING  
THE EIGHT DRAMAS



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## NOTE

**T**HIS book consists of the Poems and Masks (as apart from the Dramas) contained in the collected editions of the Poetical Works of Robert Bridges, together with two groups of Later Poems and Poems in Classical Prosody now published for the first time or now first collected.

A record of the previous publication of the poems will be found in the bibliographical notes prefixed to the various sections of the present book.

The spelling of certain words is not uniform throughout the poems. This is due to observance of the text of the earlier editions of different dates, in the notes to which the author's justification of these peculiarities was given.





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# PROMETHEUS THE FIREGIVER

## *A Mask in the Greek Manner*



### PREVIOUS EDITIONS

1. *Private Press of H. Daniel.* Oxford, 1883.
2. *Chiswick Press.* G. Bell & Sons, 1884.
3. *Clarendon Press.* Smith, Elder & Co. Vol. I, 1898.

## ARGUMENT

*Prometheus coming on earth to give fire to men appears before the palace of Inachus in Argos on a festival of Zeus. He interrupts the ceremony by announcing fire and persuades Inachus to dare the anger of Zeus and accept the gift. Inachus fetching Argeia his wife from the palace has in turn to quiet her fears. He asks a prophecy of Prometheus who foretells the fate of Io their daughter. Prometheus then setting flame to the altar and writing his own name thereon in the place of Zeus disappears.*

*The Chorus sing (1) a Hymn to Zeus with the stories of the birth of Zeus and the marriage of Hera with the dances of the Curetes and the Hesperides, (2) their anticipation of fire with an Ode on Wonder, (3) a Tragic Hymn on the lot of man, (4) a Fire-chorus, (5) a final Chorus in praise of Prometheus.*

*All the characters are good. Prometheus prologizes. He carries a long reed.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

*PROMETHEUS.*

*INACHUS.*

*ARGEIA.*

*SERVANT.*

*IO (persona muta).*

*CHORUS: Youths and maidens of the house of  
Inachus.*

*The SCENE is in ARGOS before the palace of Inachus.*

*An altar inscribed to Zeus is at the  
centre of the stage.*

# PROMETHEUS THE FIREGIVER

## *PROMETHEUS.*

FROM high Olympus and the ætherial courts,  
Where mighty Zeus our angry king confirms  
The Fates' decrees and bends the wills of the gods,  
I come : and on the earth step with glad foot.

This variegated ocean-floor of the air,  
The changeful circle of fair land, that lies  
Heaven's dial, sisterly mirror of night and day :  
The wide o'er-wandered plain, this nether world  
My truant haunt is, when from jealous eyes  
I steal, for hither 'tis I steal, and here 10  
Unseen repair my joy : yet not unseen  
Methinks, nor seen unguessed of him I seek.  
Rather by swath or furrow, or where the path  
Is walled with corn I am found, by trellised vine  
Or olive set in banks or orchard trim :  
I watch all toil and tilth, farm, field and fold,  
And taste the mortal joy ; since not in heaven  
Among our easeful gods hath facile time  
A touch so keen, to wake such love of life  
As stirs the frail and careful being, who here, 20  
The king of sorrows, melancholy man,  
Bows at his labour, but in heart erect  
A god stands, nor for any gift of god  
Would barter his immortal-hearted prime.

Could I but win this world from Zeus for mine,  
With not a god to vex my happy rule,  
I would inhabit here and leave high heaven :  
So much I love it and its race of men,

## Prometheus

Even as he hates them, hates both them, and me  
For loving what he hates, and would destroy me, 30  
Outcast in the scorn of all his cringing crew,  
For daring but to save what he would slay :  
And me must first destroy. Thus he denieth  
My heart's wish, thus my counsel sets at naught,  
Which him saved once, when all at stake he stood  
Uprisen in rebellion to overthrow  
The elderseated Titans, for I that day  
Gave him the counsels which his foes despised.  
Unhappy they, who had still their blissful seats  
Preserved and their Olympian majesty, 40  
Had they been one with me. Alas, my kin !

But he, when he had taken the throne and chained  
His foes in wasteful Tartarus, said no more  
Where is Prometheus our wise counsellor ?  
What saith Prometheus ? tell us, O Prometheus,  
What Fate requires ! but waxing confident  
And wanton, as a youth first tasting power,  
He wrecked the timeless monuments of heaven,  
The witness of the wisdom of the gods,  
And making all about him new, beyond 50  
Determined to destroy the race of men,  
And that create afresh or else have none.

Then his vain mind imagined a device,  
And at his bidding all the opposèd winds  
Blew, and the scattered clouds and furlèd snows,  
From every part of heaven together flying,  
He with brute hands in huge disorder heaped :  
They with the winds' weight and his angry breath  
Were thawed : in cataracts they fell, and earth  
In darkness deep and whelmèd tempest lay, 60  
Drowned 'neath the waters. Yet on the mountain-tops  
Some few escaped, and some, thus warned by me,  
Made shift to live in vessels which outrode  
The season and the fury of the flood.

## *The Firegiver*

And when his rain was spent and from clear skies  
Zeus looking down upon the watery world,  
Beheld these few, the remnant of mankind,  
Who yet stood up and breathed ; he next withdrew  
The seeds of fire, that else had still lain hid  
In withered branch and the blue flakes of flint 70  
For man to exact and use, but these withdrawn,  
Man with the brutes degraded would be man  
No more ; and so the tyrant was content.

But I, despised again, again upheld  
The weak, and pitying them sent sweet Hope,  
Bearer of dreams, enchantress fond and kind,  
From heaven descending on the unhindered rays  
Of every star, to cheer with visions fair  
Their unamending pains. And now this day  
Behold I come bearing the seal of all 80  
Which Hope had promised : for within this reed  
A prisoner I bring them stolen from heaven,  
The flash of mastering fire, and it have borne  
So swift to earth, that when yon noontide sun  
Rose from the sea at morning I was by,  
And unperceived of Hêlios plunged the point  
I' the burning axle, and withdrew a tongue  
Of breathing flame, which lives to leap on earth  
For man the father of all fire to come.

And hither have I brought it even to Argos 90  
Unto king Inachus, him having chosen  
Above all mortals to receive my gift :  
For he is hopeful, careful, wise, and brave.

He first, when first the floods left bare the land,  
Grew warm with enterprise, and gathered men  
Together, and disposed their various tasks  
For common weal combined ; for soon were seen  
The long straight channels dwindling on the plain,  
Which slow from stagnant pool and wide morass  
The pestilent waters to the rivers bore : 100

## *Prometheus*

Then in the ruined dwellings and old tombs  
He dug, unbedding from the wormèd ooze  
Vessels and tools of trade and husbandry ;  
Wherewith, all seasonable works restored,  
Oil made he and wine anew, and taught mankind  
To live not brutally though without fire,  
Tending their flocks and herds and weaving wool,  
Living on fruit and milk and shepherds' fare,  
Till time should bring back flame to smithy and hearth,  
Or Zeus relent. Now at these gates I stand, 110  
At this mid hour, when Inachus comes forth  
To offer sacrifice unto his foe.  
For never hath his faithful zeal forborne  
To pay the power, though hard, that rules the world  
The smokeless sacrifice ; which first to-day  
Shall smoke, and rise at heaven in flame to brave  
The baffled god. See here a servant bears  
For the cold altar ceremonial wood :  
My shepherd's cloak will serve me for disguise.

### *SERVANT.*

With much toil have I hewn these sapless logs. 120

PR. But toil brings health, and health is happiness.

SERV. Here's one I know not—nay, how came he here  
Unseen by me? I pray thee, stranger, tell me  
What wouldst thou at the house of Inachus?

PR. Intruders, friend, and travellers have glib tongues,  
Silence will question such.

SERV. If 'tis a message,  
To-day is not thy day—who sent thee hither?

PR. The business of my leisure was well guessed :  
But he that sent me hither is I that come.

SERV. I smell the matter—thou wouldst serve the house?

PR. 'Twas for that very cause I fled my own. 131

SERV. From cruelty or fear of punishment?

PR. Cruel was my master, for he slew his father.



## *The Firegiver*

His punishments thou speakest of are crimes.

SERV. Thou dost well flying one that slew his father.

PR. Thy lord, they say, is kind.

SERV.

Well, thou wilt see.

Thou may'st at once begin—come, give a hand.

PR. A day of freedom is a day of pleasure :

And what thou doest have I never done,

And understanding not might mar thy work.

140

SERV. Ay true—there is a right way and a wrong  
In laying wood.

PR. Then let me see thee lay it :

The sight of a skill'd hand will teach an art.

SERV. Thou seest this faggot which I now unbind,  
How it is packed within.

PR.

I see the cones

And needles of the fir, which by the wind

In melancholy places ceaselessly

Sighing are strewn upon the tufted floor.

SERV. These took I from a sheltered bank, whereon

The sun looks down at noon ; for there is need

150

The things be dry. These first I spread ; and then

Small sticks that snap i' the hand.

PR.

Such are enough

To burden the slow flight of labouring rooks,

When on the leafless tree-tops in young March

Their glossy herds assembling soothe the air

With cries of solemn joy and cawings loud.

And such the long-necked herons will bear to mend

Their airy platform, when the loving spring

Bids them take thought for their expected young.

SERV. See even so I cross them and cross them so : 160

Larger and by degrees a steady stack

Have built, whereon the heaviest logs may lie :

And all of sun-dried wood : and now 'tis done.

PR. And now 'tis done, what means it now 'tis done ?

SERV. Well, thus 'tis rightly done : but why 'tis so

## Prometheus

I cannot tell, nor any man here knows ;  
Save that our master when he sacrificeth,  
As thou wilt hear anon, speaketh of fire ;  
And fire he saith is good for gods and men ;  
And the gods have it and men have it not : 170  
And then he prays the gods to send us fire ;  
And we, against they send it, must have wood  
Laid ready thus as I have shewn thee here.

PR. To-day he sacrificeth ?

SERV.

Ay, this noon.

Hark ! hear'st thou not ? they come. The solemn flutes  
Warn us away ; we must not here be seen  
In these our soiled habits, yet may stand  
Where we may hear and see and not be seen.

[*Exeunt R.*]

*Enter CHORUS, and from the palace INACHUS bearing cakes : he comes to stand behind the altar.*

### CHORUS.

God of Heaven !

We praise thee, Zeus most high, 180  
To whom by eternal Fate was given  
The range and rule of the sky ;  
When thy lot, first of three  
Leapt out, as sages tell,  
And won Olympus for thee,  
Therein for ever to dwell :  
But the next with the barren sea  
To grave Poseidôn fell,  
And left fierce Hades his doom, to be  
The lord and terror of hell. 190

(2) Thou sittest for aye  
Encircled in azure bright,  
Regarding the path of the sun by day,  
And the changeful moon by night :

## *The Firegiver*

Attending with tireless ears  
To the song of adoring love,  
With which the separate spheres  
Are voicèd that turn above:  
And all that is hidden under  
The clouds thy footing has furl'd  
Fears the hand that holdeth the thunder,  
The eye that looks on the world.

200

### *Semichorus of youths.*

Of all the isles of the sea  
Is Crete most famed in story :  
Above all mountains famous to me  
Is Ida and crowned with glory.  
There guarded of Heaven and Earth  
Came Rhea at fall of night  
To hide a wondrous birth  
From the Sire's unfathering sight.  
The halls of Cronos rang  
With omens of coming ill,  
And the mad Curètes danced and sang  
Adown the slopes of the hill.

210

Then all the peaks of Gnossus kindled red  
Beckoning afar unto the sinking sun,  
He thro' the vaporous west plunged to his bed,  
Sunk, and the day was done.  
But they, though he was fled,  
Such light still held, as oft  
Hanging in air aloft,  
At eve from shadowed ship  
The Egyptian sailor sees :  
Or like the twofold tip  
That o'er the topmost trees  
Flares on Parnassus, and the Theban dames  
Quake at the ghostly flames.

220

## Prometheus

Then friendly night arose  
To succour Earth, and spread  
Her mantle o'er the snows 230  
And quenched their rosy red ;  
But in the east upsprings  
Another light on them,  
Selêné with white wings  
And hueless diadem.  
Little could she befriend  
Her father's house and state,  
Nor her weak beams defend  
Hypérion from his fate.  
Only where'er she shines, 240  
In terror looking forth,  
She sees the wailing pines  
Stoop to the bitter North :  
Or searching twice or thrice  
Along the rocky walls,  
She marks the columned ice  
Of frozen waterfalls :  
But still the darkened cave  
Grew darker as she shone,  
Wherein was Rhea gone 250  
Her child to bear and save.

[ *They dance.*

Then danced the Dactyls and Curêtes wild,  
And drowned with yells the cries of mother and child ;  
Big-armed Damnámeneus gan prance and shout :  
And burly Acmon struck the echoes out :  
And Kermis leaped and howled : and Titias pranced  
And broad Cyllenus tore the air and danced :  
While deep within the shadowed cave at rest  
Lay Rhea, with her babe upon her breast.

# *The Firegiver*

## *INACHUS.*

If any here there be whose impure hands 260  
Among pure hands, or guilty heart among  
Our guiltless hearts be stained with blood or wrong,  
Let him depart !

If there be any here in whom high Zeus  
Seeing impiety might turn away,  
Now from our sacrifice and from his sin  
Let him depart !

*Semichorus of maidens.*

I have chosen to praise  
Hêra the wife, and bring  
A hymn for the feast on marriage days 270  
To the wife of the gods' king.  
How on her festival  
The gods had loving strife,  
Which should give of them all  
The fairest gift to the wife.  
But Earth said, Fair to see  
Is mine and yields to none,  
I have grown for her joy a sacred tree,  
With apples of gold thereon.

Then Hêra, when she heard what Earth had given, 280  
Smiled for her joy, and longed and came to see :  
On dovewings flying from the height of heaven,  
Down to the golden tree :  
As tired birds at even  
Come flying straight to house  
On their accustomed boughs.  
'Twas where, on tortured hands  
Bearing the mighty pole.  
Devoted Atlas stands :  
And round his bowed head roll 290

## Prometheus

Day-light and night, and stars unmingled dance,  
Nor can he raise his glance.

She saw the rocky coast  
Whereon the azured waves  
Are laced in foam, or lost  
In water-lighted caves ;  
The olive island where,  
Amid the purple seas,  
Night unto Darkness bare  
The four Hesperides :  
And came into the shade  
Of Atlas, where she found  
The garden Earth had made  
And fenced with groves around.  
And in the midst it grew  
Alone, the priceless stem,  
As careful, clear and true  
As graving on a gem.  
Nature had kissèd Art  
And borne a child to stir  
With jealousy the heart  
Of heaven's Artificer.  
From crown to swelling root  
It mocked the goddess' praise,  
The green enamelled sprays,  
The emblazoned golden fruit.

300

310

[*They dance*

And 'neath the tree, with hair and zone unbound,  
The fair Hesperides aye danced around,  
And Ægle danced and sang 'O welcome, Queen !'  
And Erytheia sang 'The tree is green !'  
And Hestia danced and sang 'The fruit is gold !'  
And Arethusa sang 'Fair Queen, behold !'  
And all joined hands and danced about the tree,  
And sang 'O Queen, we dance and sing for thee !'

320

## *The Firegiver*

IN. If there be any here who has complaint  
Against our rule or claim or supplication,  
Now in the name of Zeus let it appear,  
Now let him speak !

*Prometheus re-enters.*

PR. All hail, most worthy king, such claim have I.

IN. May grace be with thee, stranger ; speak thy mind.

PR. To Argos, king of Argos, at thy house 331

I bring long journeying to an end this hour,

Bearing no idle message for thine ears.

For know that far thy fame has reached, and men

That ne'er have seen thee tell that thou art set

Upon the throne of virtue, that goodwill

And love thy servants are, that in thy land

Joy, honour, trust and modesty abide

And drink the air of peace, that kings must see

Thy city, would they know their peoples' good 340

And stablish them therein by wholesome laws.

But one thing mars the tale, for o'er thy lands

Travelling I have not seen from morn till eve,

Either from house or farm or labourer's cot,

In any village, nor this town of Argos

A blue-wreathed smoke arise : the hearths are cold,

This altar cold : I see the wood and cakes

Unbaken—O king, where is the fire ?

IN. If hither, stranger, thou wert come to find

That which thou findest wanting, join with us 350

Now in our sacrifice, take food within,

And having learnt our simple way of life

Return unto thy country whence thou camest.

But hast thou skill or knowledge of this thing,

How best it may be sought, or by what means

Hope to be reached, O speak ! I wait to hear.

PR. There is, O king, fire on the earth this day.

IN. On earth there is fire thou sayest !

PR. There is fire.

## Prometheus

IN. On earth this day !

PR. There is fire on earth this day.

IN. This is a sacred place, a solemn hour, 360

Thy speech is earnest : yet even if thou speak truth,  
O welcome messenger of happy tidings,  
And though I hear aright, yet to believe  
Is hard : thou canst not know what words thou speakest  
Into what ears : they never heard before  
This sound but in old tales of happier times,  
In sighs of prayer and faint unhearted hope :  
Maybe they heard not rightly, speak again !

PR. There is, O king, fire on the earth this day.

IN. Yes, yes, again. Now let sweet Music blab 370  
Her secret and give o'er ; here is a trumpet  
That mocks her method. Yet 'tis but the word.  
Maybe thy fire is not the fire I seek ;  
Maybe though thou didst see it, now 'tis quenched,  
Or guarded out of reach : speak yet again  
And swear by heaven's truth is there fire or no ;  
And if there be, what means may make it mine.

PR. There is, O king, fire on the earth this day :  
But not as thou dost seek it to be found.

IN. How seeking wrongly shall I seek aright ? 380

PR. Thou prayest here to Zeus, and him thou callest  
Almighty, knowing he could grant thy prayer :  
That if 'twere but his will, the journeying sun  
Might drop a spark into thine outstretched hand :  
That at his breath the splashing mountain brooks  
That fall from Orneæ, and cold Lernè's pool  
Would change their element, and their chill streams  
Bend in their burning banks a molten flood :  
That at his word so many messengers  
Would bring thee fire from heaven, that not a hearth 390  
In all thy land but straight would have a god  
To kneel and fan the flame : and yet to him,  
It is to him thou prayest.



## The Firegiver

**IN.** Therefore to him.

PR. Is this thy wisdom, king, to sow thy seed  
Year after year in this unsprouting soil?  
Hast thou not proved and found the will of Zeus  
A barren rock for man with prayer to plough?

IV. His anger be averted ! we judge not god  
Evil, because our wishes please him not.  
Oft our shortsighted prayers to heaven ascending  
Ask there our ruin, and are then denied  
In kindness above granting : were't not so,  
Scarce could we pray for fear to pluck our doom  
Out of the merciful withholding hands.

PR. Why then provokest thou such great goodwill  
In long denial and kind silence shown?

IN. Fie, fie! Thou lackest piety: the god's denial  
Being nought but kindness, there is hope that he  
Will make that good which is not:—or if indeed  
Good be withheld in punishment, 'tis well  
Still to seek on and pray that god relent.

PR. O Sire of Argos, Zeus will not relent.

IN. Yet fire thou say'st is on the earth this day.

PR. Not of his knowledge nor his gift, O king.

IN. By kindness of what god then has man fire?

PR. I say but on the earth unknown to Zeus.

IN. How boastest thou to know, not of his knowledge?

PR. I boast not : he that knoweth not may boast.

IN. Thy daring words bewilder sense with sound.

PR. I thought to find thee ripe for daring deeds. 420

IN. And what the deed for which I prove unripe?

PR. To take of heaven's fire.

IN. And were I ripe,

What should I dare, beseech you?

P<sub>R</sub>. The wrath of Zeus.

IN. Madman, pretending in one hand to hold  
The wrath of god and in the other fire.

PR. Thou meanest rather holding both in one.

## Prometheus

IN. Both impious art thou and incredible.

PR. Yet impious only till thou dost believe.

IN. And what believe? Ah, if I could believe!

It was but now thou saidst that there was fire, 430

And I was near believing; I believed:

Now to believe were to be mad as thou.

CHORUS. He may be mad and yet say true—maybe

The heat of prophecy like a strong wine

Shameth his reason with exultant speech.

PR. Thou say'st I am mad, and of my sober words

Hast called those impious which thou fearest true,

Those which thou knowest good, incredible.

Consider ere thou judge: be first assured

All is not good for man that seems god's will. 440

See, on thy farming skill, thy country toil

Which bends to aid the willing fruits of earth,

And would promote the seasonable year,

The face of nature is not always kind:

And if thou search the sum of visible being

To find thy blessing featured, 'tis not there:

Her best gifts cannot brim the golden cup

Of expectation which thine eager arms

Lift to her mouthèd horn—what then is this

Whose wide capacity outbids the scale 450

Of prodigal beauty, so that the seeing eye

And hearing ear, retiring unamazed

Within their quiet chambers, sit to feast

With dear imagination, nor look forth

As once they did upon the varying air?

Whence is the fathering of this desire

Which mocks at fated circumstance? nay though

Obstruction lie as cumbrous as the mountains,

Nor thy particular hap hath armed desire

Against the brunt of evil,—yet not for this 460

Faints man's desire: it is the unquenchable

Original cause, the immortal breath of being:

## *The Firegiver*

Nor is there any spirit on Earth astir,  
Nor 'neath the airy vault, nor yet beyond  
In any dweller in far-reaching space,  
Nobler or dearer than the spirit of man :  
That spirit which lives in each and will not die,  
That wooeth beauty, and for all good things  
Urgeth a voice, or in still passion sigheth,  
And where he loveth draweth the heart with him. 470  
Hast thou not heard him speaking oft and oft,  
Prompting thy secret musings and now shooting  
His feathered fancies, or in cloudy sleep  
Piling his painted dreams ? O hark to him !  
For else if folly shut his joyous strength  
To mope in her dark prison without praise,  
The hidden tears with which he wails his wrong  
Will sour the fount of life. O hark to him !  
Him may'st thou trust beyond the things thou seest.  
For many things there be upon this earth 480  
Unblest and fallen from beauty, to mislead  
Man's mind, and in a shadow justify  
The evil thoughts and deeds that work his ill ;  
Fear, hatred, lust and strife, which, if man question  
The heavenborn spirit within him, are not there.  
Yet are they bold of face, and Zeus himself,  
Seeing that Mischief held her head on high,  
Lest she should go beyond his power to quell  
And draw the inevitable Fate that waits  
On utmost ill, himself preventing Fate 490  
Hasted to drown the world, and now would crush  
Thy little remnant : but among the gods  
Is one whose love and courage stir for thee ;  
Who being of manlike spirit, by many shifts  
Has stayed the hand of the enemy, who crieth  
Thy world is not destroyed, thy good shall live :  
Thou hast more power for good than Zeus for ill,  
More courage, justice, more abundant art,

## Prometheus

More love, more joy, more reason : though around thee  
Rank-rooting evil bloom with poisonous crown, 500  
Though wan and dolorous and crooked things  
Have made their home with thee, thy good shall live.  
Know thy desire : and know that if thou seek it,  
And seek, and seek, and fear not, thou shalt find.

SEM. (*youths*). Is this a god that speaketh thus ?

SEM. (*maidens*). He speaketh as a man  
In love or great affliction yields his soul.

IN. Thou, whencesoe'er thou comest, whoe'er thou art,  
Who breakest on our solemn sacrifice  
With solemn words, I pray thee not depart 510  
Till thou hast told me more. This fire I seek  
Not for myself, whose thin and silvery hair  
Tells that my toilsome age nears to its end,  
But for my children and the aftertime,  
For great the need thereof, wretched our state ;  
Nay, set by what has been, our happiness  
Is very want, so that what now is not  
Is but the measure of what yet may be.  
And first are barest needs, which well I know  
Fire would supply, but I have hope beyond, 520  
That Nature in recovering her right  
Would kinder prove to man who seeks to learn  
Her secrets and unfold the cause of life.  
So tell me, if thou knowest, what is fire ?  
Doth earth contain it ? or, since from the sun  
Fire reaches us, since in the glimmering stars  
And pallid moon, in lightning, and the glance  
Of tracking meteors that at nightfall show  
How in the air a thousand sightless things  
Travel, and ever on their windswift course 530  
Flame when they list and into darkness go,—  
Since in all these a fiery nature dwells,  
Is fire an airy essence, a thing of heaven,  
That could we poise it, were an alien power

## *The Firegiver*

To make our wisdom less, our wonder more?

PR. Thy wish to know is good, and happy is he  
Who thus from chance and change has launched his mind  
To dwell for ever with undisturbed truth.  
This high ambition doth not prompt his hand  
To crime, his right and pleasure are not wronged 540  
By folly of his fellows, nor his eye  
Dimmed by the griefs that move the tears of men.  
Son of the earth, and citizen may be  
Of Argos or of Athens and her laws,  
But still the eternal nature, where he looks,  
O'errules him with the laws which laws obey,  
And in her heavenly city enrolls his heart.

IN. Thus ever have I held of happiness,  
The child of heavenly truth, and thus have found it  
In prayer and meditation and still thought, 550  
And thus my peace of mind based on a floor  
That doth not quaver like the joys of sense :  
Those I possess enough in seeing my slaves  
And citizens enjoy, having myself  
Tasted for once and put their sweets away.  
But of that heavenly city, of which thou sayest  
Her laws o'errule us, have I little learnt,  
For when my wandering spirit hath dared alone  
The unearthly terror of her voiceless halls,  
She hath fallen from delight, and without guide 560  
Turned back, and from her errand fled for fear.

PR. Think not that thou canst all things know, nor deem  
Such knowledge happiness : the all-knowing Fates  
No pleasure have, who sit eternally  
Spinning the unnumbered threads that Time hath woven,  
And weaves, upgathering in his furthest house  
To store from sight ; but what 'tis joy to learn  
Or use to know, that may'st thou ask of right.

IN. Then tell me, for thou knowest, what is fire?

PR. Know then, O king, that this fair earth of men, 570

## Prometheus

The Olympus of the gods, and all the heavens  
Are lesser kingdoms of the boundless space  
Wherein Fate rules ; they have their several times,  
Their seasons and the limit of their thrones,  
And from the nature of eternal things  
Springing, themselves are changed ; even as the trees  
Or birds or beasts of earth, which now arise  
To being, now in turn decay and die.

The heaven and earth thou seest, for long were held  
By Fire, a raging power, to whom the Fates 580  
Decreed a slow diminishing old age,  
But to his daughter, who is that gentle goddess,  
Queen of the clear and azure firmament,  
In heaven called Hygra, but by mortals Air,  
To her, the child of his slow dotting years,  
Was given a beauteous youth, not long to outlast  
His life, but be the pride of his decay,  
And win to gentler sway his lost domains.

And when the day of time arrived, when Air  
Took o'er from her decrepit sire the third 590  
Of the Sun's kingdoms, the one-moonèd earth,  
Straight came she down to her inheritance.

Gaze on the sun with thine unshaded eye  
And shrink from what she saw. Forests of fire  
Whose waving trunks, sucking their fuel, reared  
In branched flame roaring, and their torrid shades  
Aye underlit with fire. The mountains lifted  
And fell and followed like a running sea,  
And from their swelling flanks spumed froth of fire ;  
Or, like awakening monsters, mighty mounds 600  
Rosè on the plain awhile.

SEM. (*maidens*). He discovers a foe.

SEM. (*youths*). An enemy he paints.

PR. These all she quenched,  
Or charmed their fury into the dens and bowels  
Of earth to smoulder, there the vital heat

## The Firegiver

To hold for her creation, which then—to her aid  
Summoning high Reason from his home in heaven,—  
She wrought anew upon the temperate lands.

SEM. (*maidens*). 'Twas well Air won this kingdom of her  
sire.

SEM. (*youths*). Now say how made she green this home  
of fire.

PR. The waters first she brought, that in their streams  
And pools and seas innumerable things 611  
Brought forth, from whence she drew the fertile seeds  
Of trees and plants, and last of footed life,  
That wandered forth, and roaming to and fro,  
The rejoicing earth peopled with living sound.  
Reason advised, and Reason praised her toil;  
Which when she had done she gave him thanks, and said,  
'Fair comrade, since thou praisest what is done,  
Grant me this favour ere thou part from me:  
Make thou one fair thing for me, which shall suit 620  
With what is made, and be the best of all.'  
'Twas evening, and that night Reason made man.

SEM. (*maidens*). Children of Air are we, and live by fire.

SEM. (*youths*). The sons of Reason dwelling on the  
earth.

SEM. (*maidens*). Folk of a pleasant kingdom held  
between  
Fire's reign of terror and the latter day  
When dying, soon in turn his child must die.

SEM. (*youths*). Having a wise creator, above time  
Or youth or change, from whom our kind inherit  
The grace and pleasure of the eternal gods. 630

IN. But how came gods to rule this earth of Air?

PR. They also were her children who first ruled,  
Cronos, Iapetus, Hypérion,  
Theia and Rhea, and other mighty names  
That are but names—whom Zeus drove out from heaven,  
And with his tribe sits on their injured thrones.



## Prometheus

IN. There is no greater god in heaven than he.

PR. Nor none more cruel nor more tyrannous.

IN. But what can man against the power of god?

PR. Doth not man strive with him? thyself dost pray.

IN. That he may pardon our contrarious deeds. 641

PR. Alas! alas! what more contrarious deed,

What greater miracle of wrong than this,

That man should know his good and take it not?

To what god wilt thou pray to pardon this?

In vain was reason given, if man therewith

Shame truth, and name it wisdom to cry down

The unschooled promptings of his best desire.

The beasts that have no speech nor argument

Confute him, and the wild hog in the wood 650

That feels his longing, hurries straight thereto,

And will not turn his head.

IN. How mean'st thou this?

PR. Thou hast desired the good, and now canst feel  
How hard it is to kill the heart's desire.

IN. Shall Inachus rise against Zeus, as he  
Rose against Cronos and made war in heaven?

PR. I say not so, yet, if thou didst rebel,  
The tongue that counselled Zeus should counsel thee.

SEM. (*maidens*). This is strange counsel.

SEM. (*youths*). He is not  
A counsellor for gods or men. 660

IN. O that I knew where I might counsel find,  
That one were sent, nay, were't the least of all  
The myriad messengers of heaven, to me!  
One that should say 'This morn I stood with Zeus,  
He hath heard thy prayer and sent me: ask a boon,  
What thing thou wilt, it shall be given thee.'

PR. What wouldst thou say to such a messenger?

IN. No need to ask then what I now might ask,  
How 'tis the gods, if they have care for mortals,  
Slubber our worst necessities—and the boon, 670



## The Firegiver

No need to tell him that.

PR.                        Now, king, thou seest  
Zeus sends no messenger, but I am here.

IN. Thy speech is hard, and even thy kindest words  
Unkind. If fire thou hast, in thee 'tis kind  
To proffer it: but thou art more unkind  
Yoking heaven's wrath therewith. Nay, and how knowest  
thou

Zeus will be angry if I take of it?

Thou art a prophet : ay, but of the prophets  
Some have been taken in error, and honest time  
Has honoured many with forgetfulness.

680

I'll make this proof of thee ; Show me thy fire—  
Nay, give't me now—if thou be true at all,  
Be true so far : for the rest there's none will lose,  
Nor blame thee being false—where is thy fire ?

PR. O rather, had it thus been mine to give,  
I would have given it thus : not adding aught  
Of danger or diminishment or loss ;

So strong is my goodwill ; nor less than this  
My knowledge, but in knowledge all my power.

Yet since wise guidance with a little means  
Can more than force unminded, I have skill  
To conjure evil and outcompass strength.

690

Now give I thee my best, a little gift

To work a world of wonder ; 'tis thine own  
Of long desire, and with it I will give

The cunning of invention and all arts  
In which thy hand instructed may command,

Interpret, comfort, or ennoble nature ;

With all provision that in wisdom is,  
And what prevention in foreknowledge lies.

700

IN. Great is the gain.

PR. O king, the gain is thine,  
The penalty I more than share.

IN. Enough,

## Prometheus

I take thy gift ; nor hast thou stood more firm  
To every point of thy strange chequered tale,  
Revealing, threatening, offering more and more,  
And never all, than I to this resolve.

PR. I knew thy heart would fail not at the hour.

IN. Nay, failed I now, what were my years of toil  
More than the endurance of a harnessed brute,  
Flogged to his daily work, that cannot view  
The high design to which his labour steps ?  
And I of all men were dishonoured most  
Shrinking in fear, who never shrank from toil,  
And found abjuring, thrusting stiffly back,  
The very gift for which I stretched my hands.  
What though I suffer ? are these wintry years  
Of growing desolation to be held

710

As cherishable as the suns of spring ?  
Nay, only joyful can they be in seeing  
Long hopes accomplished, long desires fulfilled.  
And since thou hast touched ambition on the side  
Of nobleness, and stirred my proudest hope,  
And wilt fulfil this, shall I count the cost ?  
Rather decay will triumph, and cold death  
Be lapped in glory, seeing strength arise  
From weakness, from the tomb go forth a flame.

720

PR. 'Tis well ; thou art exalted now, the grace  
Becomes thy valiant spirit.

IN. Lo ! on this day  
Which hope despaired to see, hope manifests  
A vision bright as were the dreams of youth ;  
When life was easy as a sleeper's faith  
Who swims in the air and dances on the sea ;  
When all the good that scarce by toil is won,  
Or not at all is won, is as a flower  
Growing in plenty to be plucked at will :  
Is it a dream again or is it truth,  
This vision fair of Greece inhabited ?

730

## *The Firegiver*

A fairer sight than all fair Iris sees,  
Footing her airy arch of colours spun  
From Ida to Olympus, when she stays 740  
To look on Greece and thinks the sight is fair ;  
Far fairer now, clothed with the works of men.

PR. Ay, fairer far : for nature's varied pleasaunce  
Without man's life is but a desert wild,  
Which most, where most she mocks him, needs his aid.  
She knows her silence sweeter when it girds  
His murmurous cities, her wide wasteful curves  
Larger beside his economic line ;  
Or what can add a mystery to the dark,  
As doth his measured music when it moves 750  
With rhythmic sweetness through the void of night ?  
Nay, all her loveliest places are but grounds  
Of vantage, where with geometric hand,  
True square and careful compass he may come  
To plan and plant and spread abroad his towers,  
His gardens, temples, palaces and tombs.

And yet not all thou seest, with trancèd eye  
Looking upon the beauty that shall be,  
The temple-crownèd heights, the wallèd towns,  
Farms and cool summer seats, nor the broad ways 760  
That bridge the rivers and subdue the mountains,  
Nor all that travels on them, pomp or war  
Or needful merchandise, nor all the sails  
Piloting over the wind-dappled blue  
Of the summer-soothed Ægean, to thy mind  
Can picture what shall be : these are the face  
And form of beauty, but her heart and life  
Shall they be who shall see it, born to shield  
A happier birthright with intrepid arms,  
To tread down tyranny and fashion forth 770  
A virgin wisdom to subdue the world,  
To build for passion an eternal song,  
To shape her dreams in marble, and so sweet

## Prometheus

Their speech, that envious Time hearkening shall stay  
In fear to snatch, and hide his rugged hand.  
Now is the birthday of thy conquering youth,  
O man, and lo ! thy priest and prophet stand  
Beside the altar and have blessed the day.

IN. Ay, blessed be this day. Where is thy fire ?  
Or is aught else to do, ere I may take ? 780

PR. This was my message, speak and there is fire.

IN. There shall be fire. Await me here awhile.  
I go to acquaint my house, and bring them forth.

[Exit.

### CHORUS.

Hearken, O Argos, hearken !  
There will be fire.  
And thou, O Earth, give ear !  
There will be fire.

SEM. (*maidens*). Who shall be sent to fetch this fire for  
the king ?

SEM. (*youths*). Shall we put forth in boats to reap,  
And shall the waves for harvest yield 790  
The rootless flames that nimbly leap  
Upon their ever-shifting field ?

SEM. (*maidens*). Or we in olive-groves go shake  
And beat the fruiting sprays, till all  
The silv'ry glitter which they make  
Beneath into our baskets fall ?

SEM. (*youths*). To bind in sheaves and bear away  
The white unshafted darts of day ?

SEM. (*maidens*). And from the shadow one by one  
Pick up the playful oes of sun ? 800

SEM. (*youths*). Or wouldst thou mine a passage deep  
Until the darksome fire is found,  
Which prisoned long in seething sleep  
Vexes the caverns underground ?

SEM. (*maidens*). Or bid us join our palms perchance,

## *The Firegiver*

To cup the slant and chinkèd beam,  
Which mounting morn hath sent to dance  
Across our chamber while we dream?

SEM. (*youths*). Say whence and how shall we fetch this  
fire for the king?

Our hope is impatient of vain debating. 810

SEM. (*maidens*). My heart is stirred at the name of the  
wondrous thing,  
And trembles awaiting.

### *ODE.*

A coy inquisitive spirit, the spirit of wonder,  
Possesses the child in his cradle, when mortal things  
Are new, yet a varied surface and nothing under.  
It busies the mind on trifles and toys and brings  
Her grasp from nearer to further, from smaller to greater,  
And slowly teaches flight to her fledgeling wings.

Where'er she flutters and falls surprises await her :  
She soars, and beauty's miracles open in sight, 820  
The flowers and trees and beasts of the earth ; and later  
The skies of day, the moon and the stars of night ;  
'Neath which she scarcely venturing goes demurely,  
With mystery clad, in the awe of depth and height.

O happy for still unconscious, for ah ! how surely,  
How soon and surely will disenchantment come,  
When first to herself she boasts to walk securely,  
And drives the master spirit away from his home ;

Seeing the marvellous things that make the morning  
Are marvels of every-day, familiar, and some 830  
Have lost with use, like earthly robes, their adorning,  
As earthly joys the charm of a first delight,  
And some are fallen from awe to neglect and scorning ;  
Until—

O tarry not long, dear needed sprite !

## Prometheus

Till thou, though uninvited, with fancy returnest  
To hallow beauty and make the dull heart bright :  
To inhabit again thy gladdened kingdom in earnest ;  
Wherein—

from the smile of beauty afar forecasting  
The pleasure of god, thou livest at peace and yearnest  
With wonder everlasting.

840

## SECOND PART

*Re-enter from the palace INACHUS, with ARGEIA and IO.*

### INACHUS.

THAT but a small and easy thing now seems,  
Which from my house when I came forth at noon  
A dream was and beyond the reach of man.

'Tis now a fancy of the will, a word,  
Liberty's lightest prize. Yet still as one  
Who loiters on the threshold of delight,  
Delaying pleasure for the love of pleasure,  
I dally—Come, Argeia, and share my triumph !  
And set our daughter by thee ; though her eyes  
Are young, there are no eyes this day so young  
As shall forget this day—while one thing more  
I ask of thee ; this evil, will it light  
On me or on my house or on mankind ?

850

PR. Scarce on mankind, O Inachus, for Zeus  
A second time failing will not again  
Measure his spite against their better fate.  
And now the terror, which awhile o'er Earth  
Its black wings spread, shall up to Heaven ascend  
And gnaw the tyrant's heart : for there is whispered  
A word gone forth to scare the mighty gods ;  
How one must soon be born, and born of men,

860

## *The Firegiver*

Who shall drive out their impious host from heaven,  
And from their skyey dwellings rule mankind  
In truth and love. So scarce on man will fall  
This evil, nay, nor on thyself, O king ;  
Thy name shall live an honoured name in Greece.

IN. Then on my house 'twill be. Know'st thou no more ?

PR. Know I no more ? Ay, if my purpose fail  
'Tis not for lack of knowing : if I suffer,  
'Tis not that poisonous fear hath slurred her task, 870  
Or let brave resolution walk unarmed.  
My ears are callous to the threats of Zeus,  
The direful penalties his oath hath laid  
On every good that I in heart and hand  
Am sworn to accomplish, and for all his threats,  
Lest their accomplishment should outrun mine,  
Am bound the more. Nay, nor his evil minions,  
Nor force, nor strength, shall bend me to his will.

### *ARGEIA.*

Alas, alas, what heavy words are these,  
That in the place of joy forbid your tongue, 880  
That cloud and change his face, while desperate sorrow  
Sighs in his heart ? I came to share a triumph :  
All is dismay and terror. What is this ?

IN. True, wife, I spake of triumph, and I told thee  
The winter-withering hope of my whole life  
Has flower'd to-day in amaranth : what the hope  
Thou knowest, who hast shared ; but the condition  
I told thee not and thou hast heard : this prophet,  
Who comes to bring us fire, hath said that Zeus  
Wills not the gift he brings, and will be wroth 890  
With us that take it.

AR. O doleful change, I came  
In pious purpose, nay, I heard within  
The hymn to glorious Zeus : I rose and said,  
The mighty god now bends, he thrusts aside

## Prometheus

His heavenly supplicants to hear the prayer  
Of Inachus his servant ; let him hear.  
O let him turn away now lest he hear.  
Nay, frown not on me ; though a woman's voice  
That counsels is but heard impatiently,  
Yet by thy love, and by the sons I bare thee, 900  
By this our daughter, our last ripening fruit,  
By our long happiness and hope of more,  
Hear me and let me speak.

IN.

Well, wife, speak on.

AR. Thy voice forbids more than thy words invite :  
Yet say whence comes this stranger. Know'st thou not ?  
Yet whencesoe'er, if he but wish us well,  
He will not bound his kindness in a day.  
Do nought in haste. Send now to Sicyon  
And fetch thy son Phorôneus, for his stake  
In this is more than thine, and he is wise. 910  
'Twere well Phorôneus and Ægialeus  
Were both here : maybe they would both refuse  
The strange conditions which this stranger brings.  
Were we not happy too before he came ?  
Doth he not offer us unhappiness ?  
Bid him depart, and at some other time,  
When you have well considered, then return.

IN. 'Tis his conditions that we now shall hear.

AR. O hide them yet ! Are there not tales enough  
Of what the wrathful gods have wrought on men ? 920  
Nay, 'twas this very fire thou now wouldst take,  
Which vain Salmoneus, son of Æolus,  
Made boast to have, and from his rattling car  
Threw up at heaven to mock the lightning. Him  
The thunderer stayed not to deride, but sent  
One blinding fork, that in the vacant sky  
Shook like a serpent's tongue, which is but seen  
In memory, and he was not, or for burial  
Rode with the ashes of his royal city



## *The Firegiver*

Upon the whirlwind of the riven air. 930  
And after him his brother Athamas,  
King of Orchomenos, in frenzy fell  
For Hera's wrath, and raving killed his son ;  
And would have killed fair Ino, but that she fled  
Into the sea, preferring there to woo  
The choking waters, rather than that the arm  
Which had so oft embraced should do her wrong.  
For which old crimes the gods yet unappeased  
Demand a sacrifice, and the king's son  
Dreads the priest's knife, and all the city mourns. 940  
Or shall I say what shameful fury it was  
With which Poseidon smote Pasiphaë,  
But for neglect of a recorded vow :  
Or how Actæon fared of Artemis  
When he surprised her, most himself surprised :  
And even while he looked his boasted bow  
Fell from his hands, and through his veins there ran  
A strange oblivious trouble, darkening sense  
Till he knew nothing but a hideous fear  
Which bade him fly, and faster, as behind 950  
He heard his hounds give tongue, that through the wood  
Were following, closing, caught him and tore him down.  
And many more thus perished in their prime ;  
Lycaon and his fifty sons, whom Zeus  
In their own house spied on, and unawares  
Watching at hand, from his disguise arose.  
And overset the table where they sat  
Around their impious feast and slew them all :  
Alcyonè and Ceyx, queen and king,  
Who for their arrogance were changed to birds : 960  
And Cadmus now a serpent, once a king :  
And saddest Niobe, whom not the love  
Of Leto aught availed, when once her boast  
Went out, though all her crime was too much pride  
Of heaven's most precious gift, her children fair.

## Prometheus

Six daughters had she, and six stalwart sons ;  
But Leto bade her two destroy the twelve.  
And somewhere now, among lone mountain rocks  
On Sipylus, where couch the nymphs at night  
Who dance all day by Achelous' stream, 970  
The once proud mother lies, herself a rock,  
And in cold breast broods o'er the goddess' wrong.

IN. Now hush thy fear. See how thou tremblest still.  
Or if thou fear, fear passion ; for the freshes  
Of tenderness and motherly love will drown  
The eye of judgment : yet, since even excess  
Of the soft quality fits woman well,  
I praise thee ; nor would ask thee less to aid  
With counsel, than in love to share my choice.  
Tho' weak thy hands to poise, thine eye may mark 980  
This balance, how the good of all outweighs  
The good of one or two, though these be us.  
Let not reluctance shame the sacrifice  
Which in another thou wert first to praise.

AR. Alas for me, for thee and for our children,  
Who, being our being, having all our having,  
If they fare ill, our pride lies in the dust.

IN. O deem not a man's children are but those  
Out of his loins engendered—our spirit's love  
Hath such prolific consequence, that Virtue 990  
Cometh of ancestry more pure than blood,  
And counts her seed as sand upon the shore.  
Happy is he whose body's sons proclaim  
Their father's honour, but more blest to whom  
The world is dutiful, whose children spring  
Out of all nations, and whose pride the proud  
Rise to regenerate when they call him sire.

AR. Thus, husband, ever have I bought and buy  
Nobleness cheaply being linked with thee.  
Forgive my weakness ; see, I now am bold ; 1000  
Tell me the worst I'll hear and wish 'twere more.

## *The Firegiver*

IN. Retire—thy tears perchance may stir again.

AR. Nay, I am full of wonder and would hear.

PR. Bid me not tell if ye have fear to hear ;

But have no fear. Knowledge of future things  
Can nothing change man's spirit : and though he seem  
To aim his passion darkly, like a shaft  
Shot toward some fearful sound in thickest night,  
He hath an owl's eye, and must blink at day.

The springs of memory, that feed alike 1010  
His thought and action, draw from furthest time  
Their constant source, and hardly brook constraint  
Of actual circumstance, far less attend  
On glassed futurity ; nay, death itself,  
His fate unquestioned, his foretasted pain,  
The certainty foreknown of things unknown,  
Cannot discourage his habitual being  
In its appointed motions, to make waver  
His eager hand, nor loosen the desire  
Of the most feeble melancholy heart 1020  
Even from the unhopefullest of all her dreams.

IN. Since then I long to know, now something say  
Of what will come to mine when I am gone.

PR. And let the maid too hear, for 'tis of her  
I speak, to tell her whither she should turn  
The day ye drive her forth from hearth and home.

IN. What say'st thou? drive her out? and we? from  
home?

Banish the comfort of our eyes? Nay rather  
Believe that these obedient hands will tear  
The heart out of my breast, ere it do this. 1030

PR. When her wild cries arouse the house at night,  
And, running to her bed, ye see her set  
Upright in tranced sleep, her starting hair  
With deathly sweat bedewed, in horror shaking,  
Her eyeballs fixed upon the unbodied dark,  
Through which a draping mist of luminous gloom

## Prometheus

Drifts from her couch away,—when, if asleep,  
She walks as if awake, and if awake  
Dreams, and as one who nothing hears or sees,  
Lives in a sick and frantic mood, whose cause 1040  
She understands not or is loth to tell—

AR. Ah, ah, my child, my child !—Dost thou feel aught ?  
Speak to me—nay, 'tis nothing—hearken not.

PR. Ye then distraught with sorrow, neither knowing  
Whether to save were best or lose, will seek  
Apollo's oracle.

IN. And what the answer ?  
Will it discover nought to avert this sorrow ?

PR. Or else thy whole race perish root and branch.

IN. Alas ! alas !

PR. Yet shall she live though lost ; from human form  
Changed, that thou wilt not know thy daughter more. 1051

IN. Woe, woe ! my thought was praying for her death.

PR. In Hera's temple shall her prison be  
At high Mycenæ, till from heaven be sent  
Hermes, with song to soothe and sword to slay  
The beast whose hundred eyes devour the door.

IN. Enough, enough is told, unless indeed,  
The beast once slain, thou canst restore our child.

PR. Nay, with her freedom will her wanderings  
Begin. Come hither, child—nay, let her come : 1060  
What words remain to speak will not offend her,  
And shall in memory quicken, when she looks  
To learn where she should go ;—for go she must,  
Stung by the venomous fly, whose angry flight  
She still will hear about her, till she come  
To lay her sevenfold-carried burden down  
Upon the Æthiop shore where he shall reign.

IN. But say—say first, what form—

PR. In snow-white hide  
Of those that feel the goad and wear the yoke. 1069

IN. Round-hoofed, or such as tread with cloven foot ?

## *The Firegiver*

PR. Wide-horned, large-eyed, broad-fronted, and the feet  
Cloven which carry her to her far goal.

IN. Will that of all these evils be the term?

PR. Ay, but the journey first which she must learn.

Hear now, my child ; the day when thou art free,  
Leaving the lion-gate, descend and strike  
The Trêtan road to Nemea, skirting wide  
The unhunted forest o'er the watered plain  
To walled Cleônæ, whence the traversed stream  
To Corinth guides : there enter not, but pass 1080  
To narrow Isthmus, where Poseidon won  
A country from Apollo, and through the town  
Of Crommyon, till along the robber's road  
Pacing, thy left eye meet the westering sun  
O'er Geraneia, and thou reach the hill  
Of Megara, where Car thy brother's babe  
In time shall rule ; next past Eleusis climb  
Stony Panactum and the pine-clad slopes  
Of Phyle ; shun the left-hand way, and keep  
The rocks ; the second day thy feet shall tread 1090  
The plains of Græa, whence the roadway serves  
Aulis and Mycalessus to the point  
Of vext Euripus : fear not then the stream,  
Nor scenting think to taste, but plunging in  
Breast its salt current to the further shore.  
For on this island mayst thou lose awhile  
Thy maddening pest, and rest and pasture find,  
And from the heafs of bold Macistus see  
The country left and sought : but when thou feel  
Thy torment urge, move down, recross the flood, 1100  
And west by Harma's fenced gap arrive  
At seven-gated Thebes : thy friendly goddess  
Ongan Athenè has her seat without.

CHOR. Now if she may not stay thy toilsome destined  
steps,  
I pray that she may slay for thee the maddening fly.

## Prometheus

PR. Keep not her sanctuary long, but seek  
Bœotian Ascra, where the Muses' fount,  
Famed Aganippè, wells : Ocalea  
Pass, and Tilphusa's northern steeps descend  
By Alalcomenæ, the goddess' town. 1110  
Guard now the lake's low shore, till thou have crossed  
Hyrcana and Cephissus, the last streams  
Which feed its reedy pools, when thou shalt come  
Between two mountains that enclose the way  
By peakèd Abæ to Hyampolis.  
The right-hand path that thither parts the vale  
Opes to Cyrtonè and the Locrian lands ;  
Toward Elateia thou, where o'er the marsh  
A path with stones is laid ; and thence beyond  
To Thronium, Tarp'hè, and Thermopylæ, 1120  
Where rocky Lamia views the Maliac gulf.

CHOR. If further she should go, will she not see  
That other Argos, the Dodonian land ?

PR. Crossing the Phthian hills thou next shalt reach  
Pharsalus, and Olympus' peakèd snows  
Shall guide thee o'er the green Pelasgic plains  
For many a day, but to Argissa come  
Let old Peneius thy slow pilot be  
Through Tempè, till they turn upon his left  
Crowning the wooded slopes with splendours bare. 1130  
Thence issuing forth on the Pierian shore  
Northward of Ossa thou shalt touch the lands  
Of Macedon.

CHOR. Alas, we wish thee speed,  
But bid thee here farewell ; for out of Greece  
Thou goest 'mongst the folk whose chattering speech  
Is like the voice of birds, nor home again  
Wilt thou return.

PR. Thy way along the coast  
Lies till it southward turn, when thou shalt seek  
Where wide on Strymon's plain the hindered flood

## *The Firegiver*

Spreads like a lake ; thy course to his oppose 1140  
And face him to the mountain whence he comes :  
Which doubled, Thrace receives thee : barbarous names  
Of mountain, town and river, and a people  
Strange to thine eyes and ears, the Agathyrsi,  
Of pictured skins, who owe no marriage law,  
And o'er whose gay-spun garments sprent with gold  
Their hanging hair is blue. Their torrent swim  
That measures Europe in two parts, and go  
Eastward along the sea, to mount the lands  
Beyond man's dwelling, and the rising steeps 1150  
That face the sun untrodden and unnamed.—

Know to earth's verge remote thou then art come,  
The Scythian tract and wilderness forlorn,  
Through whose rude rocks and frosty silences  
No path shall guide thee then, nor my words now.  
There as thou toilest o'er the treacherous snows,  
A sound then thou shalt hear to stop thy breath,  
And prick thy trembling ears ; a far-off cry,  
Whose throat seems the white mountain and its passion  
The woe of earth. Flee not, nor turn not back : 1160  
Let thine ears drink and guide thine eyes to see  
That sight whose terrors shall assuage thy terror,  
Whose pain shall kill thy pain. Stretched on the rock,  
Naked to scorching sun, to pinching frost,  
To wind and storm and beaks of wingèd fiends  
From year to year he lies. Refrain to ask  
His name and crime—nay, haply when thou see him  
Thou wilt remember—'tis thy tyrant's foe,  
Man's friend, who pays his chosen penalty.  
Draw near, my child, for he will know thy need, 1170  
And point from land to land thy further path.

### CHORUS.

O miserable man, hear now the worst.  
O weak and tearful race,



## *Prometheus*

Born to unhappiness, see now thy cause  
Doomed and accurst !

It surely were enough, the bad and good  
Together mingled, against chance and ill  
To strive, and prospering by turns,  
Now these, now those, now folly and now skill,  
Alike by means well understood  
Or 'gainst all likelihood ;  
Loveliness slaving to the unlovely will  
That overrides the right and laughs at law.

1180

But always all in awe  
And imminent dread :  
Because there is no mischief thought or said,  
Imaginable or unguessed,  
But it may come to be ; nor home of rest,  
Nor hour secure : but anywhere,  
At any moment ; in the air,  
Or on the earth or sea,  
Or in the fair  
And tender body itself it lurks, creeps in,  
Or seizes suddenly,  
Torturing, burning, withering, devouring,  
Shaking, destroying ; till tormented life  
Sides with the slayer, not to be,  
And from the cruel strife  
Falls to fate overpowering.

1190

Or if some patient heart,  
In toilsome steps of duty tread apart,  
Thinking to win her peace within herself,  
And thus awhile succeed :  
She must see others bleed,  
At others' misery moan,  
And learn the common suffering is her own,  
From which it is no freedom to be freed :

1200



## *The Firegiver*

Nay, Nature, her best nurse,  
Is tender but to breed a finer sense,  
Which she may easier wound, with smart the worse 1210  
And torture more intense.

And no strength for thee but the thought of duty,  
Nor any solace but the love of beauty.  
O Right's toil unrewarded !  
O Love's prize unaccorded !

I say this might suffice,  
O tearful and unstable  
And miserable man,  
Were't but from day to day  
Thy miserable lot, 1220  
This might suffice, I say,  
To term thee miserable.  
But thou of all thine ills too must take thought,  
Must grow familiar till no curse astound thee,  
With tears recall the past,  
With tears the times forecast ;  
With tears, with tears thou hast  
The scapeless net spread in thy sight around thee.

How then support thy fate,  
O miserable man, if this befall, 1230  
That he who loves thee and would aid thee, daring  
To raise an arm for thy deliverance,  
Must for his courage suffer worse than all ?

IN. Bravest deliverer, for thy prophecy  
Has torn the veil which hid thee from my eyes,  
If thyself art that spirit, of whom some things  
Were darkly spoken,—nor can I doubt thou art,  
Being that the heaven its fire withholds not from thee  
Nor time his secrets,—tell me now thy name,  
That I may praise thee rightly ; and my late 1240

## *Prometheus*

Unwitting words pardon thou, and these who still  
In blinded wonder kneel not to thy love.

PR. Speak not of love. See, I am moved with hate,  
And fiercest anger, which will sometimes spur  
The heart to extremity, till it forget  
That there is any joy save furious war.

Nay, were there now another deed to do,  
Which more could hurt our enemy than this,  
Which here I stand to venture, here would I leave thee  
Conspiring at his altar, and fly off

1250

To plunge the branding terror in his soul.  
But now the rising passion of my will  
Already jars his reaching sense, already  
From heaven he bids his minion Hermes forth  
To bring his only rebel to his feet.

Therefore no more delay, the time is short.

IN. I take, I take. 'Tis but for thee to give.

PR. O heavenly fire, life's life, the eye of day,  
Whose nimble waves upon the starry night  
Of boundless ether love to play,  
Carrying commands to every gliding sprite  
To feed all things with colour, from the ray  
Of thy bright-glancing, white  
And silver-spinning light :

1260

Unweaving its thin tissue for the bow  
Of Iris, separating countless hues  
Of various splendour for the grateful flowers  
To crown the hasting hours,  
Changing their special garlands as they choose.

O spirit of rage and might,  
Who canst unchain the links of winter stark,  
And bid earth's stubborn metals flow like oil,  
Her porphyrous heart-veins boil ;  
Whose arrows pierce the cloudy shields of dark ;  
Let now this flame, which did to life awaken

1270

## *The Firegiver*

Beyond the cold dew-gathering veils of morn,  
And thence by me was taken,  
And in this reed was borne,  
A smothered theft and gift to man below,  
Here with my breath revive,  
Restore thy lapsèd realm, and be the sire  
Of many an earthly fire.

1280

O flame, flame bright and live,  
Appear upon the altar as I blow.

CHOR. 'Twas in the marish reed.  
See to his mouth he sets its hollow flute  
And breathes therein with heed,  
As one who from a pipe with breathings mute  
Will music's voice evoke.—  
See, the curl of a cloud.

1290

IN. The smoke, the smoke !

SEMICHORUS. Thin clouds mounting higher.

IN. 'Tis smoke, the smoke of fire.

SEMICHORUS. Thick they come and thicker,

Quick arise and quicker,

Higher still and higher.

Their wreaths the wood enfold.

—I see a spot of gold.

They spring from a spot of gold,

Red gold, deep among

The leaves : a golden tongue.

O behold, behold,

Dancing tongues of gold,

That leaping aloft flicker,

Higher still and higher.

IN. 'Tis fire, the flame of fire !

SEMICHORUS. The blue smoke overhead

Is turned to angry red.

The fire, the fire, it stirs.

Hark, a crackling sound,

1300

1310

## Prometheus

As when all around  
Ripened pods of furze  
Split in the parching sun  
Their dry caps one by one,  
And shed their seeds on the ground.

—Ah! what clouds arise.

Away! O come away.

The wind-wafted smoke,

Blowing all astray,

Blinds and pricks my eyes.

Ah! I choke, I choke.

—All the midst is rent:

See, the twigs are all

By the flaming spent

White and gold, and fall.

How they writhe, resist,

Blacken, flake, and twist,

Snap in gold and fall.

—See the stars that mount,

Momentary bright

Flitting specks of light

More than eye can count.

Insects of the air,

As in summer night

Show a fire in flying

Flickering here and there,

Waving past and dying.

—Look, a common cone

Of the mountain pine

Solid gold is grown;

Till its scales outshine,

Standing each alone

In the spiral rows

Of their fair design,

All the brightest shows

Of the sun's decline.

[PROMETHEUS,  
*after writing his  
name on the al-  
tar, goes out un-  
observed.*]

1330

1340

## The Firegiver

—Hark, there came a hiss,  
Like a startled snake  
Sliding through the brake.  
Oh, and what is this? 1350  
Smaller flames that flee  
Sidelong from the tree,  
Hark, they hiss, they hiss.  
—How the gay flames flicker,  
Spurting, dancing, leaping  
Quicker yet and quicker,  
Higher yet and higher,  
—Flaming, flaring, fuming,  
Cracking, crackling, creeping,  
Hissing and consuming: 1360  
Mighty is the fire.

IN. Stay, stay, cease your rejoicings. Where is he,  
The prophet,—nay, what say I,—the god, the giver?

CHOR. He is not here—he is gone.

IN. Search, search around.

Search all, search well.

CHOR. He is gone,—he is not here.

IN. The palace gate lies open : go, Argeia,  
Maybe he went within : go seek him there.

[Exit AR.

Look down the sea road, down the country road :  
Follow him if ye see him.

CHOR. He is not there.

IN. Strain, strain your eyes : look well : search everywhere.  
Look townwards—is he there?

*Part of CHORUS returning.* He is not there.— 1371

*Other part returning.* He is not there.

*Argeia re-entering.*

AR. He is not there.

CHOR. O see!

CHOR. See where?

# Prometheus

CHOR. See on the altar—see!

CHOR. What see ye on the altar?

CHOR. Here in front

Words newly writ.

CHOR. What words?

CHOR. A name—

IN. Ay true—

There is the name. How like a child was I,  
That I must wait till these dumb letters gave  
The shape and soul to knowledge : when the god  
Stood here so self-revealed to ears and eyes  
That, 'tis a god I said, yet wavering still,  
Doubting what god,—and now, who else but he?  
I knew him, yet not well ; I knew him not :  
Prometheus—ay, Prometheus. Know ye, my children,  
This name we see was writ by him we seek.

1380

'Tis his own name, his own heart-stirring name,  
Feared and revered among the immortal gods :  
Divine Prometheus : see how here the large  
Cadmeian characters run, scoring out  
The hated title of his ancient foe,—  
To Zeus 'twas made,—and now 'tis to Prometheus—  
Writ with the charred reed—thrift upon theft.  
He hath stolen from Zeus his altar, and with his fire  
Hath lit our sacrifice unto himself.  
Ió Prometheus, friend and firegiver,  
For good or ill thy thefts and gifts are ours.  
We worshipped thee unknowing.

1390

CHOR. But now where is he?

IN. No need to search—we shall not see him more.  
We look in vain. The high gods when they choose  
Put on and off the solid visible shape  
Which more deceives our hasty sense, than when  
Seeing them not we judge they stand aloof.  
And he, he now is gone ; his work is done :  
'Tis ours to see it be not done in vain.

1400

## *The Firegiver*

CHOR. What is to do? speak, bid, command, we fly.

IN. Go some and fetch more wood to feed the fire;  
And some into the city to proclaim  
That fire is ours: and send out messengers  
To Corinth, Sicyon, Megara and Athens  
And to Mycenæ, telling we have fire:  
And bid that in the temples they prepare  
Their altars, and send hither careful men  
To learn of me what things the time requires.

1410

[*Exit part of CHORUS.*]

The rest remain to end our feast; and now  
Seeing this altar is no more to Zeus,  
But shall for ever be with smouldering heat  
Fed for the god who first set fire thereon,  
Change ye your hymns, which in the praise of Zeus  
Ye came to sing, and change the prayer for fire  
Which ye were wont to raise, to high thanksgiving,  
Praising aloud the giver and his gift.

1420

*Part of CHORUS.* Now our happy feast hath ending,  
While the sun in heaven descending  
Sees us gathered round a light  
Born to cheer his vacant night.  
Praising him to-day who came  
Bearing far his heavenly flame:  
Came to crown our king's desire  
With his gift of golden fire.

SEMICHORUS. My heart, my heart is freed.  
Now can I sing. I loose a shaft from my bow,  
A song from my heart to heaven, and watch it speed.  
It revels in the air, and straight to its goal doth go.

1430

I have no fear. I praise distinguishing duly:  
I praise the love that I love and I worship truly.  
Goodness I praise, not might,  
Nor more will I speak of wrong,

## Prometheus

But of lovingkindness and right ;  
And the god of my love shall rejoice at the sound of my song.

I praise him whom I have seen :  
As a man he is beautiful, blending prime and youth, 1440  
Of gentle and lovely mien,  
With the step and the eyes of truth,  
As a god,—O were I a god, but thus to be man !  
As a god, I set him above  
The rest of the gods ; for his gifts are pledges of love,  
The words of his mouth rare and precious,  
His eyes' glance and the smile of his lips are love.

He is the one  
Alone of all the gods,  
Of righteous Themis the lofty-spirited son, 1450  
Who hates the wrongs they have done.  
He is the one I adore.  
For if there be love in heaven with evil to cope,—  
And he promised us more and more,—  
For what may we not hope ?

### ODE.

My soul is drunk with joy, her new desire  
In far forbidden places wanders away.  
Her hopes with free bright-coloured wings of fire  
Upon the gloom of thought  
Are sailing out. 1460  
Awhile they rise, awhile to rest they softly fall,  
Like butterflies, that flit  
Across the mountains, or upon a wall  
Winking their idle fans at pleasure sit.

O my vague desires !  
Ye lambent flames of the soul, her offspring fires :  
That are my soul herself in pangs sublime  
Rising and flying to heaven before her time :



## *The Firegiver*

What doth tempt you forth  
To melt in the south or shiver in the frosty north? 1470  
What seek ye or find ye in your random flying,  
For ever soaring aloft, soaring and dying?

Joy, the joy of flight;  
They hide in the sun, they flare and dance in the night.  
Gone up, gone out of sight—and ever again  
Follow fresh tongues of fire, fresh pangs of pain.

Ah! could I control  
These vague desires, these leaping flames of the soul:  
Could I but quench the fire, ah! could I stay  
My soul that flieth, alas, and dieth away! 1480

[*Enter other part of* CHORUS.]

*Part of* CHOR. Here is wood to feed the fire—  
Never let its flames expire.  
Sing ye still while we advance  
Round the fire in measured dance,  
While the sun in heaven descending  
Sees our happy feast have ending.  
Weave ye still your joyous song,  
While we bear the wood along.

SEMICHORUS. But O return,  
Return, thou flower of the gods! 1490  
Remember the limbs that toil and the hearts that yearn,  
Remember, and soon return!  
To prosper with peace and skill  
Our hands in the works of pleasure, beauty and use.  
Return, and be for us still  
Our shield from the anger of Zeus.

And he, if he raise his arm in anger to smite thee,  
And think for the good thou hast done with pain to requite  
thee,

Vengeance I heard thee tell,  
And the curse I take for my own, 1500  
That his place is prepared in hell,

## *Prometheus*

And a greater than he shall hurl him down from his throne.

Down, down from his throne !

For the god who shall rule mankind from the deathless  
skies

By mercy and truth shall be known,

In love and peace shall arise.

For him,—if again I hear him thunder above,

O then, if I crouch or start,

I will press thy lovingkindness more to my heart,

Remember the words of thy mouth rare and precious, 1510

Thy heart of hearts and gifts of divine love.

# DE METER

## *A Mask*

*"Dreams & the light imaginings of men"*



WRITTEN FOR THE LADIES AT

SOMERVILLE COLLEGE

& ACTED BY THEM

AT THE INAUGURATION OF THEIR NEW BUILDING

IN 1904



*PREVIOUS EDITION*

*Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1905*

## ARGUMENT OF THE PLAY

*The scene is in the flowery valley below Enna. Hades prologizes, and tells how he has come with consent of Zeus to carry off Persephone to be his queen. The Chorus of Ocean nymphs entering praise Sicily and the spring. Persephone enters with Athena and Artemis to gather flowers for the festival of Zeus. Persephone being left alone is carried off by Hades.*

*In the second act, which is ten days later, the Chorus deplore the loss of Persephone. Demeter entering upbraids them in a choric scene and describes her search for Persephone until she learnt her fate from Helios. Afterwards she describes her plan for compelling Zeus to restore her. Hermes brings from Zeus a command to Demeter that she shall return to Olympus. She sends defiance to Zeus, and the Chorus end the scene by vowing to win Poseidon to aid Demeter.*

*In the third act, which is a year later, the Chorus, who have been summoned by Demeter to witness the restoration of Persephone, lament Demeter's anger. Demeter narrates the Eleusinian episode of her wanderings, until Hermes enters leading Persephone. After their greeting Demeter hears from Hermes the terms of Persephone's restoration; she is reconciled thereto by Persephone, and invites her to Eleusis. The Chorus sing and crown Persephone with flowers.*

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## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HADES. }  
DEMETER. }

PERSEPHONE.

ATHENA.

ARTEMIS. }  
HERMES. }

Chorus of

OCEANIDES.

# DEMETER

## *HADES.*

I AM the King of Hell, nor prone to vex  
Eternal destiny with weak complaint ;  
Nor when I took my kingdom did I mourn  
My lot, from heav'n expell'd, deny'd to enjoy  
Its radiant revelry and ambrosial feast,  
Nor blamed our mighty Sisters, that not one  
Would share my empire in the shades of night.

But when a younger race of gods arose,  
And Zeus set many sons on heav'nly seats,  
And many daughters dower'd with new domain, 10  
And year by year were multiply'd on earth  
Their temples and their statu'd sanctities,  
Mirrors of man's ideas that grow apace,  
Yea, since man's mind was one with my desire  
That Hell should have a queen,—for heav'n hath queens  
Many, nor on all earth reigns any king  
In unkind isolation like to me,—  
I claimed from Zeus that of the fair immortals  
One should be given to mè to grace my throne.

Willing he was, and quick to praise my rule, 20  
And of mere justice there had granted me  
Whome'er I chose : but ' Brother mine,' he said,  
' Great as my power among the gods, this thing  
I cannot compass, that a child of mine,  
Who once hath tasted of celestial life,  
Should all forgo, and destitute of bliss  
Descend into the shades, albeit to sit  
An equal on thy throne. Take whom thou wilt ;

## Demeter

But by triumphant force persuade, as erst  
I conquer'd heav'n.' Said I 'My heart is set : 30  
I take Demeter's child Persephone ;  
Dost thou consent ?' Whereto he gave his nod.  
And I am come to-day with hidden powers,  
Ev'n unto Enna's fair Sicilian field,  
To rob her from the earth. 'Tis here she wanders  
With all her train : nor is this flow'ry vale  
Fairer among the fairest vales of earth,  
Nor any flower within this flow'ry vale  
Fair above other flowers, as she is fairest  
Among immortal goddesses, the daughter 40  
Of gentle-eyed Demeter ; and her passion  
Is for the flowers, and every tenderness  
That I have long'd for in my fierce abodes.  
But she hath always in attendant guard  
The dancing nymphs of Ocean, and to-day  
The wise Athena and chaste Artemis  
Indulge her girlish fancy, gathering flowers  
To deck the banner of my golden brother,  
Whose thought they guess not, tho' their presence here  
Affront his will and mine. If once alone 50  
I spy her, I can snatch her swiftly down ;  
And after shall find favour for my fault,  
When I by gentle means have won her love.  
I hear their music now. Hither they come :  
I'll to my ambush in the rocky cave. [Exit.

# *Demeter*

A C T I

*Enter Chorus of Oceanides, with baskets,*

## *OCEANIDES.*

Gay and lovely is earth, man's decorate dwelling ;  
With fresh beauty ever varying hour to hour.  
As now bathed in azure joy she awakeneth  
With bright morn to the sun's life-giving effluence,  
Or sunk into solemn darkness aneath the stars 60  
In mysterious awe slumbereth out the night,  
Then from darkness again plunging again to day ;  
Like dolphins in a swift herd that accompany  
Poseidon's chariot when he rebukes the waves.  
But no country to me 'neath the enarching air  
Is fair as Sicily's flowery fruitful isle :  
Always lovely, whether winter adorn the hills  
With his silvery snow, or generous summer  
Outpour her heavy gold on the river-valleys.  
Her rare beauty giveth gaiety unto man, 70  
A delite dear to immortals.

2

And one season of all chiefly deliteth us,  
When fair Spring is afield. O happy is the Spring !  
Now birds early arouse their pretty minstreling ;  
Now down its rocky hill murmureth ev'ry rill ;  
Now all bursteth anew, wantoning in the dew  
Their bells of bonny blue, their chalices honey'd.  
Unkind frost is away ; now sunny is the day ;  
Now man thinketh aright, Life it is all delite.  
Now maids playfully dance o'er enamel'd meadows, 80  
And with goldy blossom deck forehead and bosom ;  
While old Pan rollicketh thro' the budding shadows,  
Voicing his merry reed, laughing aloud to lead  
The echoes madly rejoicing.

3

We be Océanids, Persephone's lovers,  
 Who all came hurrying joyfully from the sea  
 Ere daybreak to obey her belovèd summons.  
 At her fancy to pluck these violets, lilies,  
 Windflow'rs and daffodils, all for a festival  
 Whereat shé will adorn Zeuses honour'd banner.  
 And with Persephone there cometh Artemis  
 And grave Pallas . . . Hilloo ! already they approach !  
 Haste, haste ! stoop to gather ! seem busy ev'ryone !  
 Crowd all your wicker arcs with the meadow-lilies ;  
 Lest our disreverenc'd deity should rebuke  
 The divine children of Ocean.

90

[Enter ATHENA, PERSEPHONE, and ARTEMIS. *Persephone has  
 a basket half fill'd with gather'd flowers.*]

ATHENA.

These then are Enna's flowery fields, and here  
 In midmost isle the garden of thy choice ?

PERSEPHONE.

Is not all as I promist ? Feel ye not  
 Your earthborn ecstasy concentr'd here ?  
 Tell me, Athena, of thy wisdom, whence  
 Cometh this joy of earth, this penetrant  
 Palpitant exultation so unlike  
 The balanc't calm of high Olympian state ?  
 Is 't in the air, the tinted atmosphere  
 Whose gauzy veil, thrown on the hills, will paint  
 Their features, changing with the gradual day,  
 Rosy or azure, clouded now, and now  
 Again afire ? Or is it that the sun's  
 Electric beams—which shot in circling fans  
 Whirl all things with them—as they strike the earth  
 Excite her yearning heart, till stir'd beneath

100

110



The rocks and silent plains, she cannot hold  
 Her fond desires, but sends them bursting forth  
 In scents and colour'd blossoms of the spring?—  
 Breathes it not in the flowers?

ATH. Fair are the flowers,  
 Dear child ; and yet to me far lovelier  
 Than all their beauty is thy love for them.  
 Whate'er I love, I contemplate my love  
 More than the object, and am so rejoic'd. 120  
 For life is one, and like a level sea  
 Life's flood of joy. Thou wond'rest at the flowers,  
 But I would teach thee wonder of thy wonder :  
 Would shew thee beauty in the desert-sand,  
 The worth of things unreckt of, and the truth  
 That thy desire and love may spring of evil  
 And ugliness, and that Earth's ecstasy  
 May dwell in darkness also, in sorrow and tears.

PER. I'd not believe it : why then should we pluck  
 The flowers and not the stalks without the flowers ? 130  
 Or do thy stones breathe scent ? Would not men laugh  
 To see the banner of almighty Zeus  
 Adorn'd with ragged roots and straws?—Dear Artemis,  
 How lovest thou the flowers ?

*ARTEMIS.*

I'll love them better  
 Ever for thy sake, Cora ; but for me  
 The joy of Earth is in the breath of life  
 And animal motions : nor are flowery sweets  
 Dear as the scent of life. This petal'd cup,  
 What is it by the wild fawn's liquid eye  
 Eloquent as love-music 'neath the moon ? 140  
 Nay, not a flower in all thy garden here,  
 Nor wer't a thousand-thousand-fold enhanc't  
 In every charm, but thou wouldst turn from it  
 To view the antler'd stag, that in the glade

With the coy gaze of his majestic fear  
Faced thee a moment ere he turn'd to fly.

PER. But why, then, hunt and kill what thou so lovest?

AR. Dost thou not pluck thy flowers?

PER. 'Tis not the same.

Thy victims fly for life : they pant, they scream.

AR. Were they not mortal, sweet, I could not kill them.

They kill each other in their lust for life ; 151

Nay, cruelly persecute their blemisht kin :

And they that thus are exiled from the herd

Slink heart-brok'n to sepulchral solitudes,

Defenceless and dishonour'd ; there to fall

Prey to the hungry glutton of the cave,

Or stand in mute pain lingering, till they drop

In their last lair upon the ancestral bones.

PER. What is it that offends me?

ATH. 'Tis Pity, child,

The mortal thought that clouds the brow of man 160

With dark reserve, or poisoning all delite

Drives him upon his knees in tearful prayer

To avert his momentary qualms : till Zeus

At his reiterated plaint grows wrath,

And burdens with fresh curse the curse of care.

And they that haunt with men are apt to take

Infection of his mind : thy mighty mother

Leans to his tenderness.

PER. How should man, dwelling

On earth that is so gay, himself be sad?

Is not earth gay? Look on the sea, the sky, 170

The flowers !

ATH. 'Tis sad to him because 'tis gay.—

For whether he consider how the flowers,

—Thy miracles of beauty above praise,—

Are wither'd in the moment of their glory,

So that of all the mounting summer's wealth

The show is chang'd each day, and each day dies,

Of no more count in Nature's estimate  
Than crowded bubbles of the fighting foam :  
Or whether 'tis the sea, whose azure waves  
Play'd in the same infinity of motion 180  
Ages ere he beheld it, and will play  
For ages after him ;—alike 'tis sad  
To read how beauty dies and he must die.

PER. Were I a man, I would not worship thee,  
Thou cold essential wisdom. If, as thou say'st,  
Thought makes men sorrowful, why help his thought  
To quench enjoyment, who might else as I  
Revel among bright things, and feast his sense  
With beauty well-discern'd ? Nay, why came ye  
To share my pastime ? Ye love not the flowers. 190

ATH. Indeed I love thee, child ; and love thy flowers,—  
Nor less for loving wisely. All emotions,  
Whether of gods or men, all loves and passions,  
Are of two kinds ; they are either inform'd by wisdom,  
To reason obedient,—or they are uncondacted,  
Flames of the burning life. The brutes of earth  
And Pan their master know these last ; the first  
Are seen in me : betwixt the extremes there lie  
Innumerable alloys and all of evil.

PER. Nay, and I guess your purpose with me well : 200  
I am a child, and ye would nurse me up  
A pupil in your school. I know ye twain  
Of all the immortals are at one in this ;  
Ye wage of cold disdain a bitter feud  
With Aphrodite, and ye fear for me,  
Lest she should draw me to her wanton way.  
Fear not : my party is taken. Hark ! I'll tell  
What I have chosen, what mankind shall hold  
Devote and consecrate to me on earth :  
It is the flowers : but only among the flowers 210  
Those that men love for beauty, scent, or hue,  
Having no other uses : I have found

Demeter, my good mother, heeds them not.—  
She loves vines, olives, orchards, 'the rich leas  
Of wheat, rye, barley, vetches, oats, and peas,'  
But for the idle flowers she hath little care :  
She will resign them willingly. And think not,  
Thou wise Athena, I shall go unhonour'd,  
Or rank a meaner goddess unto man.  
His spirit setteth beauty before wisdom, 220  
Pleasures above necessities, and thus  
He ever adareth flowers. Nor this I guess  
Where rich men only and superfluous kings  
Around their palaces reform the land  
To terraces and level lawns, whereon  
Appointed slaves are told, to tend and feed  
Lilies and roses and all rarest plants  
Fetch'd from all lands ; that they—these lordly men—  
'Twixt flaunting avenues and wafted odours  
May pace in indolence : this is their bliss ; 230  
This first they do : and after, it may be,  
Within their garden set their academe :—  
But in the poorest villages, around  
The meanest cottage, where no other solace  
Comforts the eye, some simple gaiety  
Of flowers in tended garden is seen ; some pinks,  
Tulips, or crocuses that edge the path ;  
Where oft at eve the grateful labourer  
Sits in his jasmin'd porch, and takes the sun :  
And even the children, that half-naked go, 240  
Have posies in their hands, and of themselves  
Will choose a queen in whom to honour Spring,  
Dancing before her garlanded with may.  
The cowslip makes them truant, they forget  
The hour of hunger and their homely feast  
So they may cull the delicate primrose,  
Sealing their birthright with the touch of beauty ;  
With unconsider'd hecatombs assuring

Their dim sense of immortal mystery.—

Yea, rich and poor, from cradle unto grave

250

All men shall love me, shall adore my name,

And heap my everlasting shrine with flowers.

ATH. Thou sayest rightly thou art a child. May Zeus

Give thee a better province than thy thought.

[*Music heard.*

AR. Listen ! the nymphs are dancing. Let us go !

[*They move off.*

Come, Cora ; wilt thou learn a hunting dance ?

I'll teach thee.

PER. Can I learn thy hunter-step  
Without thy bare legs and well-buskin'd feet ?

AR. Give me thy hand.

PER. Stay ! stay ! I have left my flowers.  
I follow.

[*Exeunt Athena and Artemis.*

[*Persephone returning to right slowly.*

They understand not—Now, praise be to Zeus,

261

That, tho' I sprang not from his head, I know

Something that Pallas knows not.

[*She has come to where her basket lies. In stooping towards it she kneels to pluck a flower : and then comes to sit on a bank with the basket in hand on her knees, facing the audience.*]

Thou tiny flower !

Art thou not wise ?

Who taught thee else, thou frail anemone,

Thy starry notion, thy wind-wavering motion,

Thy complex of chaste beauty, unimagined

Till thou art seen ?—And how so wisely, thou,

Indifferent to the number of thy rays,

270

While others are so strict ? This six-leaved tulip,

—He would not risk a seventh for all his worth,—

He thought to attain unique magnificence

By sheer simplicity—a pointed oval

Bare on a stalk erect : and yet, grown old

He will his young idea quite abandon,

In his dishevel'd fury wantoning  
 Beyond belief . . . Some are four-leaved : this poppy  
 Will have but four. He, like a hurried thief,  
 Stuffs his rich silks into too small a bag— 280  
 I think he watch'd a summer-butterfly  
 Creep out all crumpled from his winter-case,  
 Trusting the sun to smooth his tender tissue  
 And sleek the velvet of his painted wings :—  
 And so doth he.—Between such different schemes,  
 Such widely varied loveliness, how choose ?  
 Yet loving all, one should be most belov'd,  
 Most intimately mine ; to mortal men  
 My emblem : tho' I never find in one  
 The sum of all distinctions.—Rose were best : 290  
 But she is passion's darling, and unkind  
 To handle—set her by.—Choosing for odour,  
 The violet were mine—men call her modest,  
 Because she hides, and when in company  
 Lacks manner and the assertive style of worth :—  
 While this narcissus here scorns modesty,  
 Will stand up what she is, tho' something prim :  
 Her scent, a saturation of one tone,  
 Like her plain symmetry, leaves nought to fancy :—  
 Whereas this iris,—she outvieth man's 300  
 Excellent artistry ; elaboration  
 Confounded with simplicity, till none  
 Can tell which sprang of which. Coud I but find  
 A scented iris, I should be content :  
 Yet men would call me proud : Iris is Pride.—  
 To-day I'll favour thee, sweet violet ;  
 Thou canst live in my bosom. I'll not wrong thee  
 Wearing thee in Olympus.—Help ! help ! Ay me !  
 [*Persephone rises to her feet, and amidst a contrivance of confused  
 darkness Hades is seen rushing from behind. He seizes her and  
 drags her backward. Her basket is thrown up and the flowers  
 scattered.*]

## A C T II

*CHORUS.*

## I (a)

Bright day succeedeth unto day—

Night to pensive night—

310

With his towering ray

Of all-fathering light—

With the solemn trance

Of her starry dance.—

Nought is new or strange

In the eternal change.—

As the light clouds fly

O'er the tree-tops high,

So the days go by.—

Ripples that arrive

320

On the sunny shore,

Dying to their live

Music evermore.—

Like pearls on a thread,—

Like notes of a song,—

Like the measur'd tread

Of a dancing throng.—

## (β)

Océanides are we,

Nereids of the foam,

But we left the sea

330

On the earth to roam

With the fairest Queen

That the world hath seen.—

Why amidst our play  
Was she sped away?—  
Over hill and plain  
We have sought in vain ;  
She comes not again.—  
Not the Naiads knew  
On their dewy lawns :—  
Not the laughing crew  
Of the leaping Fauns.—  
Now, since she is gone,  
All our dance is slow,  
All our joy is done,  
And our song is woe.—

340

## II

Saw ye the mighty Mother, where she went  
Searching the land ?  
Nor night nor day resting from her lament,  
With smoky torch in hand.  
Her godhead in the passion of a sorrow spent  
Which not her mind could suffer, nor heart withstand?—

350

## 2

Enlanguor'd like a fasting lioness,  
That prowls around  
Robb'd of her whelps, in fury comfortless  
Until her lost be found :  
Implacable and terrible in her wild distress ;  
And thro' the affrighted country her roars resound.—

## 3

But lo ! what form is there ? Thine eyes awaken !  
See ! see ! O say,  
Is not that she, the furious, the forsaken ?  
She cometh, lo ! this way ;  
Her golden-rippling hair upon her shoulders shaken,  
And all her visage troubled with deep dismay.

360



*DEMETER (entering).*

Here is the hateful spot, the hollow rock  
Whence the fierce ravisher sprang forth—

(*seeing the nymphs*) Ah! ye!

I know you well: ye are the nymphs of Ocean.

Ye, graceful as your watery names

And idle as the mimic flames

That skip upon his briny floor,

370

When the hot sun smiteth thereo'er;

Why did ye leave your native waves?

Did false Poseidon, to my hurt

Leagued with my foe, bid you desert

Your opalescent pearly caves,

Your dances on the shelly strand?

CH. Poseidon gave us no command,

Lady; it was thy child Persephone,

Whose beauty drew us from the sea.

DEM. Ill company ye lent, ill-fated guards!

380

How was she stolen from your distracted eyes?

CH. There, where thou standest now, stood she companion'd

By wise Athena and bright Artemis.

We in flower-gathering dance and idle song

Were wander'd off apart; we fear'd no wrong.

DEM. In heav'n I heard her cry: ye nothing heard?

CH. We heard no cry—How couldst thou hear in heaven?

Ask us not of her:—we have nought to tell.—

DEM. I seek not knowledge of you, for I know.

CH. Thou knowest? Ah, mighty Queen, deign then to tell  
If thou hast found her. Tell us—tell us—tell!

391

DEM. Oh, there are calls that love can hear,  
That strike not on the outward ear.

None heard save I: but with a dart

Of lightning-pain it pierc'd my heart,

That call for aid, that cry of fear.  
 It echo'd from the mountain-steeps  
 Down to the dark of Ocean-deeps ;  
 O'er all the isle, from ev'ry hill  
 It pierc'd my heart and echoes still, 400  
     Ay me ! Ay me !

CH. Where is she, O mighty Queen ?—Tell us—O tell !—

DEM. Swift unto earth, in frenzy led  
 By Cora's cry, from heav'n I sped.  
 Immortal terror froze my mind :  
 I fear'd, ev'n as I yearn'd to find  
 My child, my joy, faln from my care  
 Wrong'd or distresst, I knew not where,  
     Cora, my Cora !

Nor thought I whither first to fly, 410  
 Answ'ring the appeal of that wild cry :  
 But still it drew me till I came  
 To Enna, calling still her name,  
     Cora, my Cora !

CH. If thou hast found her, tell us, Queen, O tell !

DEM. Nine days I wander'd o'er the land.  
 From Enna to the eastern strand  
 I sought, and when the first night came  
 I lit my torch in Etna's flame.  
 But neither 'mid the chestnut woods 420  
 That rustle o'er his stony floods ;  
 Nor yet at daybreak on the meads  
 Where bountiful Symaethus leads  
 His chaunting boatmen to the main ;  
 Nor where the road on Hybla's plain  
 Is skirted by the spacious corn ;  
 Nor where embattled Syracuse  
 With lustrous temple fronts the morn ;  
 Nor yet by dolphin'd Arethuse ;  
 Nor when I crossed Anapus wide, 430  
 Where Cyane, his reedy bride,

Uprushing from her crystal well,  
 Doth not his cold embrace repel ;  
 Nor yet by western Eryx, where  
 Gay Aphrodite high in air  
 Beams gladness from her marble chair ;  
 Nor 'mong the mountains that enfold  
 Panormos in her shell of gold,  
 Found I my Cora : no reply  
 Came to my call, my helpless cry,  
 Cora, my Cora !

440

CH. Hast thou not found her, then? Tell us—O tell !

DEM. What wonder that I never found  
 Her whom I sought on mortal ground,  
 When she—(now will ye understand?)—  
 Dwelt in the land that is no land,  
 The fruitless and unseason'd plain  
 Where all lost things are found again ;  
 Where man's distract imaginings  
 Head-downward hang on bat-like wings,  
 'Mid mummied hopes, sleep-walking cares,  
 Crest-faln illusions and despairs,  
 The tortur'd memories of crime,  
 The outcasts of forgotten time ?

450

CH. Where is she, Queen?—where?—where?

DEM. Nor had I known,  
 Had not himself high Helios seen and told me.

CH. Alas ! Alas ! we cannot understand—  
 We pray, dear Queen, may great Zeus comfort thee.

DEM. Yea, pray to Zeus ; but pray ye for yourselves,  
 That he have pity on you, for there is need.  
 Or let Zeus hear a strange, unwonted prayer  
 That in his peril he will aid himself ;  
 For I have said, nor coud his Stygian oath  
 Add any sanction to a mother's word,  
 That, if he give not back my daughter to me,  
 Him will I slay, and lock his pining ghost

460

In sleepy prisons of unhallowing hell.

CH. (*aside*). Alas ! alas ! she is distraught with grief.—  
What comfort can we make?—How reason with her?— 469  
(*to D.*) This could not be, great Queen. How could it be  
That Zeus should be destroy'd, or thou destroy him ?

DEM. Yea, and you too : so make your prayer betimes.

CH. We pray thee, Lady, sit thou on this bank  
And we will bring thee food ; or if thou thirst,  
Water. We know too in what cooling caves  
The sly Fauns have bestow'd their skins of wine.

DEM. Ye simple creatures, I need not these things,  
And stand above your pity. Think ye me  
A woman of the earth derang'd with grief ?  
Nay, nay : but I have pity on your pity, 480  
And for your kindness I will ease the trouble  
Wherewith it wounds your gentleness : attend !  
Ye see this jewel here, that from my neck  
Hangs by this golden chain.

[*They crowd near to see.*

'Tis of Persephone. Look, 'tis a picture,

CH. How ?—Is that she ?—  
A crown she weareth.—She was never wont  
Thus . . .—nor her robe thus—and her countenance  
Hath not the smile which drew us from the sea.

DEM. Daedalus cut it, in the year he made  
The Zibian Aphrodite, and Hephaestus 490  
O'erlookt and praised the work. I treasure it  
Beyond all other jewels that I have,  
And on this chain I guard it. Say now : think ye  
It cannot fall loose until every link  
Of all the chain be broken, or if one  
Break, will it fall ?

CH. Surely if one break, Lady,  
The chain is broken and the jewel falls.

DEM. 'Tis so. Now hearken diligently. All life  
Is as this chain, and Zeus is as the jewel.

The universal life dwells first in the Earth, 500  
 The stones and soil ; therefrom the plants and trees  
 Exhale their being ; and on them the brutes  
 Feeding elaborate their sentient life,  
 And from these twain mankind ; and in mankind  
 A spirit lastly is form'd of subtler sort  
 Whereon the high gods live, sustain'd thereby,  
 And feeding on it, as plants on the soil,  
 Or animals on plants. Now see ! I hold,  
 As well ye know, one whole link of this chain :  
 If I should kill the plants, must not man perish ? 510  
 And if he perish, then the gods must die.

CH. If this were so, thou wouldst destroy thyself.

DEM. And therefore Zeus will not believe my word.

CH. Nor we believe thee, Lady : it cannot be  
 That thou shouldst seek to mend a private fortune  
 By universal ruin, and restore  
 Thy daughter by destruction of thyself.

DEM. Ye are not mothers, or ye would not wonder.  
 In me, who hold from great all-mother Rhea  
 Heritage of essential motherhood, 520  
 Ye would look rather for unbounded passion.  
 Could I, the tenderness of Nature's heart,  
 Exist, were I unheedful to protect  
 From wrong and ill the being that I gave,  
 The unweeting passions that I fondly nurtured  
 To hopes of glory, the young confidence  
 In growing happiness ? Shall I throw by  
 As self-delusion the supreme ambition,  
 Which I encourag'd till parental fondness  
 Bore the prophetic blessing, on whose truth 530  
 My spirit throve ? Oh never ! nay, nay, nay !  
 That were the one disaster, and if aid  
 I cannot, I can mightily avenge.  
 On irremediable wrong I shrink not  
 To pile immortal ruin, there to lie

As trophies on a carven tomb : nor less  
For that no memory of my deed survive,  
Nor any eye to see, nor tongue to tell.

CH. So vast injustice, Lady, were not good.

DEM. To you I seem unjust involving man.

540

CH. Why should man suffer in thy feud with Zeus ?

DEM. Let Zeus relent. There is no other way.

I will destroy the seeds of plant and tree :

Vineyard and orchard, oliveyard and cornland

Shall all withhold their fruits, and in their stead

Shall flourish the gay blooms that Cora loved.

There shall be dearth, and yet so gay the dearth

That all the land shall look in holiday

With mockery of foison ; every field

With splendour aflame. For wheat the useless poppy

550

In sheeted scarlet ; and for barley and oats

The blue and yellow weeds that mock men's toil,

Centaury and marigold in chequer'd plots :

Where seed is sown, or none, shall dandelions

And wretched ragwort vie, orchis and iris

And garish daisy, and for every flower

That in this vale she pluckt, shall spring a thousand.

Where'er she stept anemones shall crowd,

And the sweet violet. These things shall ye see.

—But I behold him whom I came to meet,

560

Hermes :—he, be he laden howsoe'er,

Will heavier-laden to his lord return.

*HERMES (entering).*

Mighty Demeter, Mother of the seasons,

Bountiful all-sustainer, fairest daughter

Of arch-ancestral Rhea,—to thee Zeus sendeth

Kindly message. He grieves seeing thy godhead

Offended wrongly at eternal justice,

'Gainst destiny ordain'd idly revolting.

Ever will he, thy brother, honour thee  
 And willingly aid thee ; but since now thy daughter 570  
 Is raised to a place on the tripartite throne,  
 He finds thee honour'd duly and not injur'd.  
 Wherefore he bids thee now lament no more,  
 But with thy presence grace the courts of heav'n.

DEM. Bright Hermes, Argus-slayer, born of Maia,  
 Who bearest empty words, the mask of war,  
 To Zeus make thine own words, that thou hast found me  
 Offended,—that I still lament my daughter,  
 Nor heed his summons to the courts of heav'n.

HER. Giv'st thou me nought but these relentless words ?

DEM. I send not words, nor dost thou carry deeds. 581  
 But know, since heav'n denies my claim, I take  
 Earth for my battle-field. Curse and defiance  
 Shall shake his throne, and, readier then for justice,  
 Zeus will enquire my terms : thou, on that day,  
 Remember them ; that he shall bid thee lead  
 Persephone from Hades by the hand,  
 And on this spot, whence she was stol'n, restore her  
 Into mine arms. Execute that ; and praise  
 Shall rise from earth and peace return to heav'n. 590

HER. How dare I carry unto Zeus thy threats ?

DEM. Approach him with a gift : this little wallet.

[*Giving a little bag of seeds.*]

I will not see thee again until the day  
 Thou lead my daughter hither thro' the gates of Hell. [*Going.*]

HER. Ah ! mighty Queen, the lightness of thy gift  
 Is greater burden than thy weighty words.

[*Exeunt severally r. and l.*]

### CHORUS.

(1) Sisters ! what have we heard !

Our fair Persephone, the flower of the earth,

By Hades stolen away, his queen to be.

(others) Alas !—alas !—ay me !

600

(2) And great Demeter's bold relentless word  
 To Hermes given,  
 Threatening mankind with dearth.

(*others*) Ay me ! alas ! alas !—

(3 *or* 1) She in her sorrow strong  
 Fears not to impeach the King of Heaven,  
 And combat wrong with wrong.—

(*others confusedly*) What can we do?—Alas !—

Back to our ocean-haunts return

To weep and mourn.—

610

What use to mourn?—

Nay, nay !—Away with sorrow :

Let us forget to-day

And look for joy to-morrow :—

[(1) Nay, nay ! hearken to me !]

Nay, how forget that on us too,—

Yea, on us all

The curse will fall.—

[(1) Harken ! I say !]

What can we do ? Alas ! alas !

620

(1) Harken ! There's nought so light,  
 Nothing of weight so small,  
 But that in even balance 'twill avail  
 Wholly to turn the scale.

Let us our feeble force unite,

And giving voice to tears,

Assail Poseidon's ears ;

Rob pleasure from his days,

Darken with sorrow all his ways,

Until his shifty mind

630

Become to pity inclined,

And 'gainst his brother turn.

(*others*) 'Tis well, thou sayest well.

(2) Yea ; for if Zeus should learn

That earth and sea were both combined

Against his cruel intent,



Sooner will he relent.

(*others*) 'Tis well—we do it—'tis well.—

(1) Come let us vow. Vow all with one accord

To harden every heart

640

Till we have won Poseidon to our part.

(*all*) We vow—we do it—we vow.

(1) Till we have conquer'd heav'n's almighty lord

And seen Persephone restored.

(*all*) We vow—we vow.

(1) Come then all ; and, as ye go,

Begin the song of woe.

*Song.*

Close up, bright flow'rs, and hang the head,

Ye beauties of the plain,

The Queen of Spring is with the dead,

650

Ye deck the earth in vain.

From your deserted vale we fly,

And where the salt waves mourn

Our song shall swell their burd'ning sigh

Until sweet joy return.

## A C T III

### CHORUS.

*Song.*

Lo where the virgin veiled in airy beams,

All-holy Morn, in splendor awakening,

Heav'n's gate hath unbarrèd, the golden

Aerial lattices set open.

With music endeth night's prisoning terror,

660

With flow'ry incense : Haste to salute the sun,

That for the day's chase, like a huntsman,

With flashing arms cometh o'er the mountain.

*Inter se.* That were a song for Artemis—I have heard  
 Men thus salute the rising sun in spring—  
 —See, we have wreaths enough and garlands plenty  
 To hide our lov'd Persephone from sight  
 If she should come.— But think you she will come?—  
 If one might trust the heavens, it is a morn  
 Promising happiness—'Tis like the day 670  
 That brought us all our grief a year ago.—

## ODE.

O that the earth, or only this fair isle wer' ours  
 Amid the ocean's blue billows,  
 With flow'ry woodland, stately mountain and valley,  
 Cascading and liliated river ;  
 Nor ever a mortal envious, laborious,  
 By anguish or dull care opprest,  
 Should come polluting with remorseful countenance  
 Our haunt of easy gaiety.  
 For us the grassy slopes, the country's airiness, 680  
 The lofty whispering forest,  
 Where rapturously Philomel invoketh the night  
 And million eager throats the morn ;  
 With doves at evening softly cooing, and mellow  
 Cadences of the dewy thrush.  
 We love the gentle deer, the nimble antelope ;  
 Mice love we and springing squirrels ;  
 To watch the gaudy flies visit the blooms, to hear  
 On ev'ry mead the grasshopper.  
 All thro' the spring-tide, thro' the indolent summer, 690  
 (If only this fair isle wer' ours)  
 Here might we dwell, forgetful of the weedy caves  
 Beneath the ocean's blue billows.

*Enter Demeter.*

CH. Hail, mighty Mother!—Welcome, great Demeter!—  
 (1) This day bring joy to thee, and peace to man!

DEM. I welcome you, my loving true allies,  
 And thank you, who for me your gentle tempers  
 Have stiffen'd in rebellion, and so long  
 Harass'd the foe. Here on this field of flowers  
 I have bid you share my victory or defeat.  
 For Hermes hath this day command from Zeus  
 To lead our lost Persephone from Hell,  
 Hither whence she was stolen.—And yet, alas !  
 Tho' Zeus is won, some secret power thwarts me ;  
 All is not won : a cloud is o'er my spirit.  
 Wherefore not yet I boast, nor will rejoice  
 Till mine eyes see her, and my arms enfold her,  
 And breast to breast we meet in fond embrace.

700

CH. Well hast thou fought, great goddess, so to wrest  
 Zeus from his word. We thank thee, call'd to share  
 Thy triumph, and rejoice. Yet O, we pray,  
 Make thou this day a day of peace for man !  
 Even if Persephone be not restored,  
 Whether Aidoneus hold her or release,  
 Relent thou.—Stay thine anger, mighty goddess ;  
 Nor with thy hateful famine slay mankind.

710

DEM. Say not that word 'relent' lest Hades hear !

CH. Consider rather if mankind should hear.

DEM. Do ye love man ?

CH. We have seen his sorrows, Lady . . .

DEM. And what can ye have seen that I know not ?—

His sorrow ?—Ah my sorrow !—and ye bid  
 Me to relent ; whose deeds of fond compassion  
 Have in this year of agony built up  
 A story for all time that shall go wand'ring  
 Further than I have wander'd ;—whereto all ears  
 Shall hearken ever, as ye will hearken now.

721

CH. Happy are we, who first shall hear the tale  
 From thine own lips, and tell it to the sea.

DEM. Attend then while I tell.—

—Parting from Hermes hence, anger'd at heart,

730

Self-exiled from the heav'ns, forgone, alone,  
 My anguish fasten'd on me, as I went  
 Wandering an alien in the haunts of men.  
 To screen my woe I put my godhead off,  
 Taking the likeness of a worthy dame,  
 A woman of the people well in years ;  
 Till going unobserv'd, it irked me soon  
 To be unoccupy'd save by my grief,  
 While men might find distraction for their sorrows  
 In useful toil. Then, of my pity rather  
 Than hope to find their simple cure my own,  
 I took resolve to share and serve their needs,  
 And be as one of them.

740

CH. Ah, mighty goddess,  
 Couldst thou so put thy dignities away,  
 And suffer the familiar brunt of men ?

DEM. In all things even as they.—And sitting down  
 One evening at Eleusis, by the well  
 Under an olive-tree, likening myself  
 Outwardly to some kindly-hearted matron,  
 Whose wisdom and experience are of worth  
 Either where childhood clamorously speaks  
 The engrossing charge of Aphrodite's gifts,  
 Or merry maidens in wide-echoing halls  
 Want sober governance ;—to me, as there  
 I sat, the daughters of King Keleos came,  
 Tall noble damsels, as kings' daughters are,  
 And, marking me a stranger, they drew from me  
 A tale told so engagingly, that they  
 Grew fain to find employment for my skill ;  
 —As men devise in mutual recompense,  
 Hoping the main advantage for themselves ;—  
 And so they bad me follow, and I enter'd  
 The palace of King Keleos, and received  
 There on my knees the youngest of the house,  
 A babe, to nurse him as a mother would :

750

760

And in that menial service I was proud  
To outrun duty and trust : and there I liv'd  
Disguised among the maidens many months.

CH. Often as have our guesses aim'd, dear Lady,  
Where thou didst hide thyself, oft as we wonder'd  
What chosen work was thine, none ever thought  
That thou didst deign to tend a mortal babe.

770

DEM. What life I led shall be for men to tell.  
But for this babe, the nursling of my sorrow,  
Whose peevish cry was my consoling care,  
How much I came to love him ye shall hear.

CH. What was he named, Lady ?

DEM.

Demophoön.

Yea, ye shall hear how much I came to love him.  
For in his small epitome I read  
The trouble of mankind ; in him I saw  
The hero's helplessness, the countless perils  
In ambush of life's promise, the desire  
Blind and instinctive, and the will perverse.  
His petty needs were man's necessities ;  
In him I nurst all mortal natur', embrac'd  
With whole affection to my breast, and lull'd  
Wailing humanity upon my knee.

780

CH. We see thou wilt not now destroy mankind.

DEM. What I could do to save man was my thought.

And, since my love was center'd in the boy,  
My thought was first for him, to rescue him ;  
That, thro' my providence, he ne'er should know  
Suffering, nor disease, nor fear of death.  
Therefore I fed him on immortal food,  
And should have gain'd my wish, so well he throve,  
But by ill-chance it hapt, once, as I held him  
Bathed in the fire at midnight (as was my wont),—  
His mother stole upon us, and ascare  
At the strange sight, screaming in loud dismay  
Compel'd me to unmask, and leave for ever

790

800

The halls of Keleos, and my work undone.

CH. 'Twas pity that she came!—Didst thou not grieve to  
lose

The small Demophoön?—Coudst thou not save him?

DEM. I had been blinded. Think ye for yourselves . . .  
What vantage were it to mankind at large  
That one should be immortal,—if all beside  
Must die and suffer misery as before?

CH. Nay, truly. And great envy borne to one  
So favour'd might have more embitter'd all.

DEM. I had been foolish. My sojourn with men 810  
Had warpt my mind with mortal tenderness.  
So, questioning myself what real gift  
I might bestow on man to help his state,  
I saw that sorrow was his life-companion,  
To be embrac't bravely, not weakly shun'd;  
That as by toil man winneth happiness,  
Thro' tribulation he must come to peace.  
How to make sorrow his friend then,—this my task.  
Here was a mystery . . . and how persuade  
This thorny truth? . . . Ye do not hearken me. 820

CH. Yea, honour'd goddess, yea, we hearken still:  
Stint not thy tale.

DEM. Ye might not understand.  
My tale to you must be a tale of deeds—  
How first I bade King Keleos build for me  
A temple in Eleusis, and ordain'd  
My worship, and the mysteries of my thought;  
Where in the sorrow that I underwent  
Man's state is pattern'd; and in picture shewn  
The way of his salvation. . . . Now with me  
—Here is a matter grateful to your ears— 830  
Your lov'd Persephone hath equal honour,  
And in the spring her festival of flowers:  
And if she should return . . .

[*Listening.*

Ah! hark! what hear I?

CH. We hear no sound.

DEM. Hush ye! Hermes : he comes.

CH. What hearest thou?

DEM. Hermes ; and not alone.

She is there. 'Tis she : I have won.

CH. Where? where?

DEM. (*aside*). Ah! can it be that out of sorrow's night,  
From tears, from yearning pain, from long despair,  
Into joy's sunlight I shall come again?—  
Aside! stand ye aside!

840

*Enter Hermes leading Persephone.*

HER. Mighty Demeter, lo! I execute  
The will of Zeus and here restore thy daughter.

DEM. I have won.

PER. Sweet Mother, thy embrace is as the welcome  
Of all the earth, thy kiss the breath of life.

DEM. Ah! but to me, Cora! Thy voice again . . .  
My tongue is trammel'd with excess of joy.

PER. Arise, my nymphs, my Oceanides!  
My Nereids all, arise! and welcome me!

Put off your strange solemnity! arise!

850

CH. Welcome! all welcome, fair Persephone!

(1) We came to welcome thee, but fell abash'd  
Seeing thy purple robe and crystal crown.

PER. Arise and serve my pleasure as of yore.

DEM. And thou too doff thy strange solemnity,  
That all may see thee as thou art, my Cora,  
Restor'd and ever mine. Put off thy crown!

PER. Awhile! dear Mother—what thou say'st is true;  
I am restor'd to thee, and evermore  
Shall be restor'd. Yet am I none the less  
Evermore Queen of Hades : and 'tis meet  
I wear the crown, the symbol of my reign.

860

DEM. What words are these, my Cora! Evermore  
Restor'd to me thou say'st . . . 'tis well—but then

Evermore Queen of Hades . . . what is this ?

I had a dark foreboding till I saw thee ;

Alas, alas ! it lives again : destroy it !

Solve me this riddle quickly, if thou mayest.

PER. Let Hermes speak, nor fear thou. All is well.

HER. Divine Demeter, thou hast won thy will, 870

And the command of Zeus have I obey'd.

Thy daughter is restor'd, and evermore

Shall be restor'd to thee as on this day.

But Hades holding to his bride, the Fates

Were kind also to him, that she should be

His queen in Hades as thy child on earth.

Yearly, as spring-tide cometh, she is thine

While flowers bloom and all the land is gay ;

But when thy corn is gather'd, and the fields

Are bare, and earth withdraws her budding life 880

From the sharp bite of winter's angry fang,

Yearly will she return and hold her throne

With great Aidoneus and the living dead :

And she hath eaten with him of such fruit

As holds her his true bride for evermore.

DEM. Alas ! alas !

PER. Rejoice, dear Mother. Let not vain lament

Trouble our joy this day, nor idle tears.

DEM. Alas ! from my own deed my trouble comes :

He gave thee of the fruit which I had curs'd : 890

I made the poison that enchanted thee.

PER. Repent not in thy triumph, but rejoice,

Who hast thy will in all, as I have mine.

DEM. I have but half my will, how hast thou more ?

PER. It was my childish fancy (thou rememb'rest),

I would be goddess of the flowers : I thought

That men should innocently honour me

With bloodless sacrifice and spring-tide joy.

Now Fate, that look'd contrary, hath fulfill'd

My project with mysterious efficacy : 900



And as a plant that yearly dieth down  
 When summer is o'er, and hideth in the earth,  
 Nor showeth promise in its wither'd leaves  
 That it shall reawaken and put forth  
 Its blossoms any more to deck the spring ;  
 So I, the mutual symbol of my choice,  
 Shall die with winter, and with spring revive.  
 How without winter coud I have my spring ?  
 How come to resurrection without death ?  
 Lo thus our joyful meeting of to-day,  
 Born of our separation, shall renew  
 Its annual ecstasy, by grief refresht :  
 And no more pall than doth the joy of spring  
 Yearly returning to the hearts of men.  
 See then the accomplishment of all my hope :  
 Rejoice, and think not to put off my crown.

910

DEM. What hast thou seen below to reconcile thee  
 To the dark moiety of thy strange fate ?

PER. Where have I been, mother ? what have I seen ?  
 The downward pathway to the gates of death : 920  
 The skeleton of earthly being, stript  
 Of all disguise : the sudden void of night :  
 The spectral records of unwholesome fear :—  
 Why was it given to me to see these things ?  
 The ruin'd godheads, disesteem'd, condemn'd  
 To toil of deathless mockery : conquerors  
 In the reverse of glory, doom'd to rule  
 The multitudinous army of their crimes :  
 The naked retribution of all wrong :—  
 Why was it given to me to see such things ? 930

DEM. Not without terror, as I think, thou speakest,  
 Nor as one reconcil'd to brook return.

PER. But since I have seen these things, with salt and fire  
 My spirit is purged, and by this crystal crown  
 Terror is tamed within me. If my words  
 Seem'd to be tinged with terror, 'twas because

I knew one hour of terror (on the day  
That took me hence) and with that memory  
Colour'd my speech, using the terms which paint  
The blindfold fears of men, who little reckon  
How they by holy innocence and love,  
By reverence and gentle lives may win  
A title to the fair Elysian fields,  
Where the good spirits dwell in ease and light  
And entertainment of those fair desires  
'That made earth beautiful . . . brave souls that spent  
Their lives for liberty and truth, grave seers  
Whose vision conquer'd darkness, pious poets  
Whose words have won Apollo's deathless praise,  
Who all escape Hell's mysteries, nor come nigh  
The Cave of Cacophysia.

DEM.                                  Mysteries !

What mysteries are these? and what the Cave?

PER. The mysteries of evil, and the cave  
Of blackness that obscures them. Even in hell  
The worst is hidden, and unfructuous night  
Stifles her essence in her truthless heart.

DEM. What is the arch-falsity? I seek to know  
The mystery of evil. Hast thou seen it?

PER. I have seen it. Coud I truly rule my kingdom  
Not having seen it?

DEM. Tell me what it is. 960

PER. 'Tis not that I forget it; tho' the thought  
Is banisht from me. But 'tis like a dream  
Whose sense is an impression lacking words.

DEM. If it would pain thee telling . . .

PER. Nay, but surely

The words of gods and men are names of things  
And thoughts accustom'd : but of things unknown  
And unimagin'd are no words at all.

DEM. And yet will words sometimes outrun the thought.

PER. What can be spoken is nothing: 'twere a path

That leading t'ward some prospect ne'er arrived. 970

DEM. The more thou holdest back, the more I long.

PER. The outward aspect only mocks my words.

DEM. Yet what is outward easy is to tell.

PER. Something is possible. This cavern lies  
In very midmost of deep-hollow'd hell.  
O'er its torn mouth the black Plutonic rock  
Is split in sharp disorder'd pinnacles  
And broken ledges, whereon sit, like apes  
Upon a wither'd tree, the hideous sins  
Of all the world : once having seen within 980  
The magnetism is heavy on them, and they crawl  
Palsied with filthy thought upon the peaks ;  
Or, squatting thro' long ages, have become  
Rooted like plants into the griping clefts :  
And there they pullulate, and moan, and strew  
The rock with fragments of their mildew'd growth.

DEM. Cora, my child ! and hast thou seen these things !

PER. Nay but the outward aspect, figur'd thus  
In mere material loathsomeness, is nought  
Beside the mystery that is hid within. 990

DEM. Search thou for words, I pray, somewhat to tell.

PER. Are there not matters past the thought of men  
Or gods to know ?

DEM. Thou meanest wherefore things  
Should be at all ? Or, if they be, why thus,  
As hot, cold, hard and soft : and wherefore Zeus  
Had but two brothers ; why the stars of heaven  
Are so innumerable, constellated  
Just as they are ; or why this Sicily  
Should be three-corner'd ? Yes, thou sayest well,  
Why things are as they are, nor gods nor men 1000  
Can know. We say that Fate appointed thus,  
And are content.—

PER. Suppose, dear Mother, there wer' a temple in  
heaven,

Which, dedicated to the unknown Cause  
 And worship of the unseen, had power to draw  
 All that was worthy and good within its gate :  
 And that the spirits who enter'd there became  
 Not only purified and comforted,  
 But that the mysteries of the shrine were such,  
 That the initiated bathed in light  
 Of infinite intelligence, and saw  
 The meaning and the reason of all things,  
 All at a glance distinctly, and perceived  
 The origin of all things to be good,  
 And the énd good, and that what appears as evil  
 Is as a film of dust, that faln thereon,  
 May,—at one stroke of the hand,—  
 Be brush'd away, and show the good beneath,  
 Solid and fair and shining : If moreover  
 This bless'd vision were of so great power  
 That none coud e'er forget it or relapse  
 To doubtful ignorance :—I say, dear Mother,  
 Suppose that there were such a temple in heaven.

1010

1020

DEM. O child, my child ! that were a temple indeed.  
 'Tis such a temple as man needs on earth ;  
 A holy shrine that makes no pact with sin,  
 A worthy shrine to draw the worthy and good,  
 A shrine of wisdom trifling not with folly,  
 A shrine of beauty, where the initiated  
 Drank love and light. . . . Strange thou shouldst speak of it.  
 I have inaugurated such a temple  
 These last days in Eleusis, have ordain'd  
 These very mysteries !—Strange thou speakest of it.  
 But by what path return we to the Cave  
 Of Cacophysia ?

1031

PER. By this path, dear Mother.  
 The Cave of Cacophysia is in all things  
 T'ward evil, as that templē were t'ward good.  
 I enter'd in. Outside the darkness was

But as accumulated sunlessness ;  
 Within 'twas positive as light itself, 1040  
 A blackness that extinguish'd : Yet I knew,  
 For Hades told me, that I was to see ;  
 And so I waited, till a forking flash  
 Of sudden lightning dazzlingly reveal'd  
 All at a glance. As on a pitchy night  
 The warder of some high acropolis  
 Looks down into the dark, and suddenly  
 Sees all the city with its roofs and streets,  
 Houses and walls, clear as in summer noon,  
 And ere he think of it, 'tis dark again,— 1050  
 So I saw all within the Cave, and held  
 The vision, 'twas so burnt upon my sense.

DEM. What saw'st thou, child ? what saw'st thou ?

PER. Nay, the things

Not to be told, because there are no words  
 Of gods or men to paint the inscrutable  
 And full initiation of hell.—I saw  
 The meaning and the reason of all things,  
 All at a glance, and in that glance perceiv'd  
 The origin of all things to be evil,  
 And the énd evil : that what seems as good 1060  
 Is as a bloom of gold that spread thereo'er  
 May, by one stroke of the hand,  
 Be brush'd away, and leave the ill beneath  
 Solid and foul and black. . . .

DEM. Now tell me, child,  
 If Hades love thee, that he sent thee thither.

PER. He said it coud not harm me : and I think  
 It hath not. [*Going up to Demeter, who kisses her.*]

DEM. Nay it hath not, . . . and I know  
 The power of evil is no power at all  
 Against eternal good. 'Tis fire on water,  
 As darkness against sunlight, like a dream 1070  
 To waken'd will. Foolish was I to fear

That aught could hurt thee, Cora. But to-day  
Speak we no more. . . . This mystery of Hell  
Will do me service : I'll not tell thee now :  
But sure it is that Fate o'erruleth all  
For good or ill : and we (no more than men)  
Have power to oppose, nor any will nor choice  
Beyond such wisdom as a fisher hath  
Who driven by sudden gale far out to sea  
Handles his fragile boat safe thro' the waves,  
Making what harbour the wild storm allows.

1080

To-day hard-featured and inscrutable Fate  
Stands to mine eyes reveal'd, nor frowns upon me.  
I thought to find thee as I knew thee, and fear'd  
Only to find thee sorrowful : I find thee  
Far other than thou wert, nor hurt by Hell.  
I thought I must console thee, but 'tis thou  
Playest the comforter : I thought to teach thee,  
And had prepared my lesson, word by word ;  
But thou art still beyond me. One thing only  
Of all my predetermin'd plan endures :  
My purpose was to bid thee to Eleusis  
For thy spring festival, which three days hence  
Inaugurates my temple. Thou wilt come?

1090

PER. I come. And art thou reconcil'd, dear Mother?

DEM. Joy and surprise make tempest in my mind ;  
When their bright stir is o'er, there will be peace.  
But ere we leave this flowery field, the scene  
Of strange and beauteous memories evermore,  
I thank thee, Hermes, for thy willing service.

1100

PER. I thank thee, son of Maia, and bid farewell.

HER. Have thy joy now, great Mother ; and have thou joy,  
Fairest Persephone, Queen of the Spring.

*CHORUS.*

Fair Persephone, garlands we bring thee,  
Flow'rs and spring-tide welcome sing thee.

Hades held thee not,

Darkness quell'd thee not.

Gay and joyful welcome !

Welcome, Queen, evermore.

Earth shall own thee,

IIIO

Thy nymphs crown thee,

Garland thee and crown thee,

Crown thee Queen evermore.





# EROS & PSYCHE

*A narrative Poem  
in twelve measures*



THE STORY DONE INTO ENGLISH  
FROM THE LATIN  
OF  
APULEIUS



*L'anima semplicetta che sa nulla.*

*O latest born, O loveliest vision far  
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy.*

*PREVIOUS EDITIONS*

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## FIRST QUARTER

### S P R I N G

PSYCHE'S EARTHLY PARENTAGE • WORSHIPPED BY  
MEN • & PERSECUTED BY APHRODITE • SHE IS  
LOVED & CARRIED OFF BY EROS

### MARCH

#### I

IN midmost length of hundred-citied Crete,  
The land that cradl'd Zeus, of old renown,  
Where grave Demeter nurseried her wheat,  
And Minos fashion'd law, ere he went down  
To judge the quaking hordes of Hell's domain,  
There dwelt a King on the Omphalian plain  
Eastward of Ida, in a little town.

#### 2

Three daughters had this King, of whom my tale  
Time hath preserved, that loveth to despise  
The wealth which men misdeem of much avail,  
Their glories for themselves that they devise;  
For clerkly is he, old hard-featured Time,  
And poets' fabl'd song and lovers' rhyme  
He storeth on his shelves to please his eyes.

## *Eros & Psyche*

3

These three princesses all were fairest fair  
And of the elder twain 'tis truth to say  
That if they stood not high above compare,  
Yet in their prime they bore the palm away;  
Outwards of loveliness; but Nature's mood,  
Gracious to make, had grudgingly endued  
And marr'd by gifting ill the beauteous clay.

4

And being in honour they were well content  
To feed on lovers' looks and courtly smiles,  
To hang their necks with jewel'd ornament,  
And gold, that vanity in vain beguiles,  
And live in gaze, and take their praise for due,  
To be the fairest maidens then to view  
Within the shores of Greece and all her isles.

5

But of that youngest one, the third princess,  
There is no likeness; since she was as far  
From pictured beauty as is ugliness,  
Though on the side where heavenly wonders are,  
Ideals out of being and above,  
Which music worshippeth, but if love love,  
'Tis, as the poet saith, to love a star.

6

Her vision rather drave from passion's heart  
What earthly soil it had afore possest;  
Since to man's purer unsubstantial part  
The brightness of her presence was address:  
And such as mock'd at God, when once they saw  
Her heavenly glance, were humbl'd, and in awe  
Of things unseen, return'd to praise the Best.

## March

7

And so before her, wheresoe'er she went,  
Hushing the crowd a thrilling whisper ran,  
And silent heads were reverently bent;  
Till from the people the belief began  
That Love's own mother had come down on earth,  
Sweet Cytherea, or of mortal birth  
A greater Goddess was vouchsaf't to man.

8

Then Aphrodite's statue in its place  
Stood without worshippers; if Cretans pray'd  
For beauty or for children, love or grace,  
The prayer and vow were offer'd to the maid;  
Unto the maid their hymns of praise were sung,  
Their victims bled for her, for her they hung  
Garland and golden gift, and none forbade.

9

And thence opinion spread beyond the shores,  
From isle to isle the wonder flew, it came  
Across the Ægæan on a thousand oars,  
Athens and Smyrna caught the virgin's fame;  
And East or West, where'er the tale had been,  
The adoration of the foam-born queen  
Fell to neglect, and men forgot her name.

10

No longer to high Paphos now 'twas sail'd;  
The fragrant altar by the Graces served  
At Cnidus was forsaken; pilgrims fail'd  
The rocky island to her name reserved,  
Proud Ephyra, and Meropis renown'd;  
'Twas all for Crete her votaries were bound,  
And to the Cretan maid her worship swerved.

# *Eros & Psyche*

11

Which when in heaven great Aphrodite saw,  
Who is the breather of the year's bright morn,  
Fount of desire and beauty without flaw,  
Herself the life that doth the world adorn;  
Seeing that without her generative might  
Nothing can spring upon the shores of light,  
Nor any bud of joy or love be born;

12

She, when she saw the insult, did not hide  
Her indignation, that a mortal frail  
With her eterne divinity had vied,  
Her fair Hellenic empire to assail,  
For which she had fled the doom of Ninus old,  
And left her wanton images unsoul'd  
In Babylon and Zidon soon to fail.

13

'Not long,' she cried, 'shall that poor girl of Crete  
God it in my despite; for I will bring  
Such mischief on the sickly counterfeit  
As soon shall cure her tribe of worshipping:  
Her beauty will I mock with loathèd lust,  
Bow down her dainty spirit to the dust,  
And leave her long alive to feel the sting.'

14

With that she calls to her her comely boy,  
The limber scion of the God of War,  
The fruit adulterous, which for man's annoy  
To that fierce partner Cytherea bore,  
EROS, the ever young, who only grew  
In mischief, and was Cupid named anew  
In westering aftertime of latin lore.

## *March*

15

What the first dawn of manhood is, the hour  
When beauty, from its fleshy bud unpent,  
Flaunts like the corol of a summer flower,  
As if all life were for that ornament,  
Such Eros seemed in years, a trifler gay,  
The prodigal of an immortal day  
For ever spending, and yet never spent.

16

His skin is brilliant with the nimble flood  
Of ichor, that comes dancing from his heart,  
Lively as fire, and redder than the blood,  
And maketh in his eyes small flashes dart,  
And curleth his hair golden, and distilleth  
Honey on his tongue, and all his body filleth  
With wanton lightsomeness in every part.

17

Naked he goeth, but with sprightly wings  
Red, iridescent, are his shoulders fledged.  
A bow his weapon, which he deftly strings,  
And little arrows barb'd and keenly edged;  
And these he shooteth true ; but else the youth  
For all his seeming recketh naught of truth,  
But most deceiveth where he most is pledged.

18

'Tis he that maketh in men's heart a strife  
Between remorseful reason and desire,  
Till with life lost they lose the love of life,  
And by their own hands wretchedly expire;  
Or slain in bloody rivalries they miss  
Even the short embracement of their bliss,  
His smile of fury and his kiss of fire.

## *Eros & Psyche*

19

He makes the strong man weak, the weak man wild;  
Ruins great business and purpose high;  
Brings down the wise to folly reconciled,  
And martial captains on their knees to sigh:  
He changeth dynasties, and on the head  
Of duteous heroes, who for honour bled,  
Smircheth the laurel that can never die.

20

Him then she call'd, and gravely kissing told  
The great dishonour to her godhead done;  
And how, if he from that in heaven would hold,  
On earth he must maintain it as her son;  
The rather that his weapons were most fit,  
As was his skill ordain'd to champion it;  
And flattering thus his ready zeal she won.

21

Whereon she quickly led him down on earth,  
And show'd him PSYCHE, thus the maid was named;  
Whom when she show'd, but could not hide her worth,  
She grew with envy tenfold more enflamed.  
'But if,' she cried, 'thou smite her as I bid,  
Soon shall our glory of this affront be rid,  
And she and all her likes for ever shamed.

22

'Make her to love the loathliest, basest wretch,  
Deform'd in body, and of moonstruck mind,  
A hideous brute and vicious, born to fetch  
Anger from dogs and cursing from the blind.  
And let her passion for the monster be  
As shameless and detestable as he  
Is most extreme and vile of humankind.'



## March

23

Which said, when he agreed, she spake no more,  
But left him to his task, and took her way  
Beside the ripples of the shell-strewn shore,  
The southward stretching margin of a bay,  
Whose sandy curves she pass'd, and taking stand  
Upon its taper horn of furthest land,  
Lookt left and right to rise and set of day.

24

Fair was the sight ; for now, though full an hour  
The sun had sunk, she saw the evening light  
In shifting colour to the zenith tower,  
And grow more gorgeous ever and more bright.  
Bathed in the warm and comfortable glow,  
The fair delighted queen forgot her woe,  
And watch'd the unwonted pageant of the night.

25

Broad and low down, where late the sun had been  
A wealth of orange-gold was thickly shed,  
Fading above into a field of green,  
Like apples ere they ripen into red,  
Then to the height a variable hue  
Of rose and pink and crimson freak'd with blue,  
And olive-border'd clouds o'er lilac led.

26

High in the opposèd west the wondering moon  
All silvery green in flying green was fleec't;  
And round the blazing South the splendour soon  
Caught all the heaven, and ran to North and East;  
And Aphrodite knew the thing was wrought  
By cunning of Poseidon, and she thought  
She would go see with whom he kept his feast.

## *Eros & Psyche*

27

Swift to her wish came swimming on the waves  
His lovely ocean nymphs, her guides to be,  
The Nereids all, who live among the caves  
And valleys of the deep, Cymodocè,  
Agavè, blue-eyed Hallia and Nesæa,  
Speio, and Thoë, Glaucè and Actæa,  
Iaira, Melitè and Amphinomè,

28

Apseudès and Nemertès, Callianassa,  
Cymothoë, Thaleia, Limnorrhea,  
Clymenè, Ianeira and Ianassa,  
Doris and Panopè and Galatea,  
Dynamenè, Dexamenè and Maira,  
Ferusa, Doto, Proto, Callianeira,  
Amphithoë, Oreithuia and Amatheia.

29

And after them sad Melicertes drave  
His chariot, that with swift unfellied wheel,  
By his two dolphins drawn along the wave,  
Flew as they plunged, yet did not dip nor reel,  
But like a plough that shears the heavy land  
Stood on the flood, and back on either hand  
O'erturn'd the briny furrow with its keel.

30

Behind came Tritons, that their conches blew,  
Greenbearded, tail'd like fish, all sleek and stark;  
And hippocampi tamed, a bristly crew,  
The browzers of old Proteus' weedy park,  
Whose chieffer Mermen brought a shell for boat,  
And balancing its hollow fan afloat,  
Push'd it to shore and bade the queen embark:

## March

31

And then the goddess stept upon the shell  
Which took her weight ; and others threw a train  
Of soft silk o'er her, that unfurl'd to swell  
In sails, at breath of flying Zephyrs twain ;  
And all her way with foam in laughter strewn,  
With stir of music and of conches blown,  
Was Aphrodite launch'd upon the main.

## APRIL

I

BUT fairest Psyche still in favour rose,  
Nor knew the jealous power against her sworn :  
And more her beauty now surpass't her foe's,  
Since 'twas transfigured by the spirit forlorn,  
That writeth, to the perfecting of grace,  
Immortal question in a mortal face,  
The vague desire whereunto man is born.

2

Already in good time her sisters both,  
Whose honest charms were never famed as hers,  
With princes of the isle had plighted troth,  
And gone to rule their foreign courtiers ;  
But she, exalted evermore beyond  
Their loveliness, made yet no lover fond,  
And gain'd but number to her worshippers.

## *Eros & Psyche*

3

To joy in others' joy had been her lot,  
And now that that was gone she wept to see  
How her transcendent beauty overshot  
The common aim of all felicity.  
For love she sigh'd ; and had some peasant rude  
For true love's sake in simple passion woo'd,  
Then Psyche had not scorn'd his wife to be.

4

For what is Beauty, if it doth not fire  
The loving answer of an eager soul ?  
Since 'tis the native food of man's desire,  
And doth to good our varying world control ;  
Which, when it was not, was for Beauty's sake  
Desired and made by Love, who still doth make  
A beauteous path thereon to Beauty's goal.

5

Should all men by some hateful venom die,  
The pity were that o'er the unpeopl'd sphere  
The sun would still bedeck the evening sky  
And the unimaginable hues appear,  
With none to mark the rose and gold and green ;  
That Spring should walk the earth, and nothing seen  
Of her fresh delicacy year by year.

6

And if some beauteous things,—whose heavenly worth  
And function overpass our mortal sense,—  
Lie waste and unregarded on the earth  
By reason of our gross intelligence,  
These are not vain, because in nature's scheme  
It lives that we shall grow from dream to dream  
In time to gather an enchantment thence.

## *April*

7

Even as we see the fairest works of men  
Awhile neglected, and the makers die ;  
But Truth comes weeping to their graves, and then  
Their fames victoriously mounting high  
Do battle with the regnant names of eld,  
To win their seats ; as when the Gods rebel'd  
Against their sires and drave them from the sky.

8

But to be praised for beauty and denied  
The meed of beauty, this was yet unknown :  
The best and bravest men have ever vied  
To win the fairest women for their own.

Thus Psyche spake, or reason'd in her mind,  
Disconsolate ; and with self-pity pined,  
In the deserted halls wandering alone.

9

And grievèd grew the King to see her woe :  
And blaming first the gods for her disease,  
He purposed to their oracle to go  
To question how he might their wrath appease,  
Or, if that might not be, the worst to hear,—  
Which is the last poor hope of them that fear.—

So he took his ship upon the northern seas,

10

And journeying to the shrine of Delphi went,  
The temple of Apollo Pythian,  
Where when the god he question'd if 'twas meant  
That Psyche should be wed, and to what man,  
The tripod shook, and o'er the vaporous well  
The chanting Pythoness gave oracle,  
And thus in priestly verse the sentence ran :

# *Eros & Psyche*

11

*High on the topmost rock with funeral feast  
Convey and leave the maid, nor look to find  
A mortal husband, but a savage beast,  
The viperous scourge of gods and humankind;  
Who shames and vexes all, and as he flies  
With sword and fire, Zeus trembles in the skies,  
And groans arise from souls to hell consign'd.*

12

With which reply the King return'd full sad :  
For though he nothing more might understand,  
Yet in the bitter bidding that he had  
No man made question of the plain command,  
That he must sacrifice the tender flower  
Of his own blood to a demonian power,  
Upon the rocky mount with his own hand.

13

Some said that she to Talos was devote,  
The metal giant, who with mile-long stride  
Cover'd the isle, walking around by rote  
Thrice every day at his appointed tide ;  
Who shepherded the sea-goats on the coast,  
And, as he past, caught up and live would roast,  
Pressing them to his burning ribs and side :

14

Whose head was made of fine gold-beaten work  
Of silver pure his arms and gleaming chest,  
Thence of green-bloomèd bronze far as the fork,  
Of iron weather-rusted all the rest.  
One single vein he had, which running down  
From head to foot was open in his crown,  
And closèd by a nail ; such was this pest.

## April

15

A little while they spent in sad delay,  
Then order'd, as the oracle had said,  
The cold feast and funereal display  
Wherewith the fated bridal should be sped :  
And their black pageantry and vain despairing  
When Psyche saw, and for herself preparing  
The hopeless ceremonial of the dead,

16

Then spake she to the King and said 'O Sire,  
Why wilt thou veil those venerable eyes  
With piteous tears, which must of me require  
More tears again than for myself arise?  
Then, on the day my beauty first o'erstept  
Its mortal place it had been well to have wept ;  
But now the fault beyond our ruing lies.

17

'As to be worship'd was my whole undoing,  
So my submission must the forfeit pay :  
And welcome were the morning of my wooing,  
Tho' after it should dawn no other day.  
Up to the mountain ! for I hear the voice  
Of my belovèd on the winds, *Rejoice,*  
*Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away !*'

18

With such distemper'd speech, that little cheer'd  
Her mourning house, she went to choose with care  
The raiment for her day of wedlock weird,  
Her body as for burial to prepare ;  
But laved with bridal water, from the stream  
Where Hera bathed ; for still her fate supreme  
Was doubtful, whether Love or Death it were :

## *Eros & Psyche*

19

Love that is made of joy, and Death of fear :  
Nay, but not these held Psyche in suspense ;  
Hers was the hope that following by the bier  
Boweth its head beneath the dark immense :  
Her fear the dread of life that turns to hide  
Its tragic tears, what hour the happy bride  
Ventures for love her maiden innocence.

20

They set 'on high upon the bridal wain  
Her bed for bier, and yet no corpse thereon ;  
But like as when unto a warrior slain  
And not brought home the ceremonies done  
Are empty, for afar his body brave  
Lies lost, deep buried by the wandering wave  
Or 'neath the foes his fury fell upon,—

21

So was her hearse : and with it went afore,  
Singing the solemn dirge that moves to tears,  
The singers ; and behind, clad as for war,  
The King uncrown'd among his mournful peers,  
All 'neath their armour robed in linen white ;  
And in their left were shields, and in their right  
Torches they bore aloft instead of spears.

22

And next the virgin tribe in white forth sail'd,  
With wreaths of dittany ; and 'midst them there  
Went Psyche, all in lily-whiteness veil'd,  
The white Quince-blossom chapleting her hair :  
And last the common folk, a weeping crowd,  
Far as the city-gates with wailings loud  
Follow'd the sad procession in despair.



## *April*

23

Thus forth and up the mount they went, until  
The funeral chariot must be left behind,  
Since road was none for steepness of the hill ;  
And slowly by the narrow path they wind :  
All afternoon their white and scatter'd file  
Toil'd on distinct, ascending many a mile  
Over the long brown slopes and crags unkind.

24

But ere unto the snowy peak they came  
Of that stormshapen pyramid so high,  
'Twas evening, and with footsteps slow and lame  
They gather'd up their lagging company :  
And then her sire, even as Apollo bade,  
Set on the topmost rock the hapless maid,  
With trembling hands and melancholy cry.

25

And now the sun was sunk ; only the peak  
Flash'd like a jewel in the deepening blue :  
And from the shade beneath none dared to speak,  
But all look'd up, where glorified anew  
Psyche sat islanded in living day.  
Breathless they watcht her, till the last red ray  
Fled from her lifted arm that waved adieu.

26

There left they her, turning with sad farewells  
To haste their homeward course, as best they might :  
But night was crowding up the barren fells,  
And hid full soon their rocky path from sight ;  
And each unto his stumbling foot to hold  
His torch was fain, for o'er the moon was roll'd  
A mighty cloud from heaven, to blot her light.

## *Eros & Psyche*

27

And thro' the darkness for long while was seen  
That armour'd train with waving fires to thread  
Downwards, by pass, defile, and black ravine,  
Each leading on the way that he was led.  
Slowly they gain'd the plain, and one by one  
Into the shadows of the woods were gone,  
Or in the clinging mists were quench'd and fled.

28

But unto Psyche, pondering o'er her doom  
In tearful silence on her stony chair,  
A Zephyr straying out of heaven's wide room  
Rush'd down, and gathering round her unaware  
Fill'd with his breath her vesture and her veil;  
And like a ship, that crowding all her sail  
Leans to accompany the tranquil air,

29

She yielded, and was borne with swimming brain  
And airy joy, along the mountain side,  
Till, hid from earth by ridging summits twain,  
They came upon a valley deep and wide;  
Where the strong Zephyr with his burden sank,  
And laid her down upon a grassy bank,  
'Mong thyme and violets and daisies pied.

30

And straight upon the touch of that sweet bed  
Both woe and wonder melted fast away:  
And sleep with gentle stress her sense o'erspread,  
Gathering as darkness doth on drooping day:  
And nestling to the ground, she slowly drew  
Her wearied limbs together, and, ere she knew,  
Wrapt in forgetfulness and slumber lay.

# *Eros & Psyche*

## MAY

### I

AFTER long sleep when Psyche first awoke  
Among the grasses 'neath the open skies,  
And heard the mounting larks, whose carol spoke  
Delighted invitation to arise,  
She lay as one who after many a league  
Hath slept off memory with his long fatigue,  
And waking knows not in what place he lies :

### 2

Anon her quickening thought took up its task,  
And all came back as it had happ'd o'ernight ;  
The sad procession of the wedding mask,  
The melancholy toiling up the height,  
The solitary rock where she was left ;  
And thence in dark and airy waftage reft,  
How on the flowers she had been disburden'd light.

### 3

Thereafter she would rise and see what place  
That voyage had its haven in, and found  
She stood upon a little hill, whose base  
Shelved off into the valley all around ;  
And all round that the steep cliffs rose away,  
Save on one side where to the break of day  
The widening dale withdrew in falling ground.

## *Eros & Psyche*

### 4

There, out from over sea, and scarce so high  
As she, the sun above his watery blaze  
Upbroke the grey dome of the morning sky,  
And struck the island with his level rays ;  
Sifting his gold thro' lazy mists, that still  
Climb'd on the shadowy roots of every hill,  
And in the tree-tops breathed their silvery haze.

### 5

At hand on either side there was a wood ;  
And on the upward lawn, that sloped between,  
Not many paces back a temple stood,  
By even steps ascending from the green ;  
With shaft and pediment of marble made,  
It fill'd the passage of the rising glade,  
And there withstay'd the sun in dazzling sheen.

### 6

Too fair for human art, so Psyche thought,  
It might the fancy of some god rejoice ;  
Like to those halls which lame Hephæstos wrought,  
Original, for each god to his choice,  
In high Olympus ; where his matchless lyre  
Apollo wakes, and the responsive choir  
Of Muses sing alternate with sweet voice.

### 7

Wondering she drew anigh, and in a while  
Went up the steps as she would entrance win,  
And faced her shadow 'neath the peristyle  
Upon the golden gate, whose flanges twin—  
As there she stood, irresolute at heart  
To try—swung to her of themselves apart ;  
Whereat she past between and stood within.

## May

8

A foursquare court it was with marble floor'd,  
Embay'd about with pillar'd porticoes,  
That echo'd in a somnolent accord  
The music of a fountain, which arose  
Sparkling in air, and splashing in its tank ;  
Whose wanton babble, as it swell'd or sank,  
Gave idle voice to silence and repose.

9

Thro' doors beneath the further colonnade,  
Like a deep cup's reflected glooms of gold,  
The inner rooms glow'd with inviting shade :  
And, standing in the court, she might behold  
Cedar, and silk, and silver ; and that all  
The pargeting of ceiling and of wall  
Was fresco'd o'er with figures manifold.

10

Then making bold to go within, she heard  
Murmur of gentle welcome in her ear ;  
And seeing none that could have spoken word,  
She waited : when again **Lady, Draw near ;**  
**Enter !** was cried ; and now more voices came  
From all the air around calling her name,  
And bidding her rejoice and have no fear.

11

And one, if she would rest, would show her bed,  
Pillow'd for sleep, with fragrant linen fine ;  
One, were she hungry, had a table spread  
Like as the high gods have it when they dine :  
Or, would she bathe, were those would heat the bath ;  
The joyous cries contending in her path,  
**Psyche**, they said, **What wilt thou ? all is thine.**

## *Eros & Psyche*

12

Then Psyche would have thank'd their service true,  
But that she fear'd her echoing words might scare  
Those sightless tongues ; and well by dream she knew  
The voices of the messengers of prayer,  
Which fly upon the gods' commandment, when  
They answer the supreme desires of men,  
Or for a while in pity hush their care.

13

'Twas fancy's consummation, and because  
She would do joy no curious despite,  
She made no wonder how the wonder was ;  
Only concern'd to take her full delight.  
So to the bath,—what luxury could be  
Better enhanced by eyeless ministry ?—  
She follows with the voices that invite.

14

There being deliciously refresht, from soil  
Of earth made pure by water, fire, and air,  
They clad her in soft robes of Asian toil,  
Scented, that in her queenly wardrobe were ;  
And led her forth to dine, and all around  
Sang as they served, the while a choral sound  
Of strings unseen and reeds the burden bare.

15

P athetic strains and passionate they wove,  
U rgent in ecstasies of heavenly sense ;  
R esponsive rivalries, that, while they strove  
C ombined in full harmonious suspense,  
E ntrancing wild desire, then fell at last  
L ull'd in soft closes, and with gay contrast  
L aunch'd forth their fresh unwearied excellence.

# May

16

Now Psyche, when her twofold feast was o'er,  
Would feed her eye ; and choosing for her guide  
A low-voiced singer, bade her come explore  
The wondrous house ; until on every side  
As surfeited with beauty, and seeing nought  
But what was rich and fair beyond her thought,  
And all her own, thus to the voice she cried :

17

‘ Am I indeed a goddess, or is this  
But to be dead : and through the gates of death  
Passing unwittingly doth man not miss  
Body nor memory nor living breath ;  
Nor by demerits of his deeds is cast,  
But, paid with the desire he holdeth fast,  
Is holp with all his heart imagineth ? ’

18

But her for all reply the wandering tongue  
Call'd to the chamber where her bed was laid  
With flower'd broideries of linen hung :  
And round the walls in painting were portray'd  
Love's victories over the gods renown'd.  
Ares and Aphrodite here lay bound  
In the fine net that dark Hephæstus made :

19

Here Zeus, in likeness of a tawny bull,  
Stoop'd on the Cretan shore his mighty knee,  
While off his back Europa beautiful  
Stept pale against the blue Carpathian sea ;  
And here Apollo, as he caught amazed  
Daphne, for lo ! her hands shot forth upraised  
In leaves, her feet were rooted like a tree :

## *Eros & Psyche*

20

Here Dionysos, springing from his car  
At sight of Ariadne ; here uplept  
Adonis to the chase, breaking the bar  
Of Aphrodite's arm for love who wept :  
He spear in hand, with leashed dogs at strain ;  
A marvellous work. But Psyche soon grown fain  
Of rest, betook her to her bed and slept.

21

Nor long had slept, when at a sudden stir  
She woke ; and one, that thro' the dark made way,  
Drew near, and stood beside ; and over her  
The curtain rustl'd. Trembling now she lay,  
Fainting with terror : till upon her face  
A kiss, and with two gentle arms' embrace,  
A voice that call'd her name in loving play.

22

Though for the darkness she could nothing see,  
She wish'd not then for what the night denied :  
This was the lover she had lack'd, and she,  
Loving his loving, was his willing bride.  
O'erjoy'd she slept again, o'erjoy'd awoke  
At break of morn upon her love to look ;  
When lo ! his empty place lay by her side.

23

So all that day she spent in company  
Of the soft voices ; and **Of right**, they said,  
**Art thou our Lady now. Be happily**  
**Thy bridal morrow by thy servants sped.**  
But she but long'd for night, if that might bring  
Her lover back ; and he on secret wing  
Came with the dark, and in the darkness fled.

( 110 )



## *May*

24

And this was all her life ; for every night  
He came, and though his name she never learn'd,  
Nor was his image yielded to her sight  
At morn or eve, she neither look'd nor yearn'd  
Beyond her happiness : and custom brought  
An ease to pleasure ; nor would Psyche's thought  
Have ever to her earthly home return'd,

25

But that one night he said ' Psyche, my soul,  
Sad danger threatens us : thy sisters twain  
Come to the mountain top, whence I thee stole,  
And thou wilt hear their voices thence complain.  
Answer them not : for it must end our love  
If they should hear or spy thee from above.'  
And Psyche said ' Their cry shall be in vain.'

26

But being again alone, she thought 'twas hard  
On her own blood ; and blamed her joy as thief  
Of theirs, her comfort which their comfort barr'd ;  
When she their care might be their care's relief.  
All day she brooded on her father's woe,  
And when at night her lover kisst her, lo !  
Her tender face was wet with tears of grief.

27

Then question'd why she wept, she all confest ;  
And begg'd of him she might but once go nigh  
To set her sire's and sisters' fears at rest ;  
Till he for pity could not but comply :  
' Only if they should ask thee of thy love  
Discover nothing to their ears above.'  
And Psyche said ' In vain shall be their cry.'

## *Eros & Psyche*

28

And yet with day no sooner was alone,  
Than she for loneliness her promise rued :  
That having so much pleasure for her own,  
'Twas all unshared and spent in solitude.  
And when at night her love flew to his place,  
More than afore she shamed his fond embrace,  
And piteously with tears her plaint renew'd.

29

The more he now denied, the more she wept ;  
Nor would in anywise be comforted,  
Unless her sisters, on the Zephyr swept,  
Should in those halls be one day bathed and fed,  
And see themselves the palace where she reign'd.  
And he, by force of tears at last constrain'd,  
Granted her wish unwillingly, and said :

30

' Much to our peril hast thou won thy will ;  
Thy sisters' love, seeing thee honour'd so,  
Will sour to envy, and with jealous skill  
Will pry to learn the thing that none may know.  
Answer not, nor inquire ; for know that I  
The day thou seest my face far hence shall fly,  
And thou anew to bitterest fate must go.'

31

But Psyche said, ' Thy love is more than life ;  
To have thee leaveth nothing to be won :  
For should the noonday prove me to be wife  
Even of the beauteous Eros, who is son  
Of Cypris, I could never love thee more.'  
Whereat he fondly kisst her o'er and o'er,  
And peace was 'twixt them till the night was done.

## SECOND QUARTER

### S U M M E R

PSYCHE'S SISTERS • SNARING HER TO DES-  
TRUCTION • ARE THEMSELVES DESTROYED

### JUNE

#### I

AND truly need there was to the old King  
For consolation : since the mournful day  
Of Psyche's fate he took no comforting,  
But only for a speedy death would pray ;  
And on his head his hair grew silver-white.  
—Such on life's topmost bough is sorrow's blight,  
When the stout heart is cankering to decay.

#### 2

Which when his daughters learnt, they both were quick  
Comfort and solace to their sire to lend.  
But as not seldom they who nurse the sick  
Will take the malady from them they tend,  
So happ'd it now ; for they who fail'd to cheer  
Grew sad themselves, and in that palace drear  
Increased the evil that they came to mend.

## *Eros & Psyche*

### 3

And them the unhappy father sent to seek  
Where Psyche had been left, if they might find  
What monster held her on the savage peak ;  
Or if she there had died of hunger pined,  
And, by wild eagles stript, her scatter'd bones  
Might still be gather'd from the barren stones ;  
Or if her fate had left no trace behind.

### 4

So just upon this time her sisters both  
Climb'd on the cliff that hung o'er Psyche's vale ;  
And finding there no sign, to leave were loth  
Ere well assured she lurk'd not within hail.  
So calling loud her name, ' Psyche ! ' they cried,  
' Psyche, O Psyche ! ' and when none replied  
They sank upon the rocks to weep and wail.

### 5

But Psyche heard their voices where she sat,  
And summoning the Zephyr bade him fleet  
Those mourners down unto the grassy plat  
'Midst of her garden, where she had her seat.  
Then from the dizzy steep the wondering pair  
Came swiftly sinking on his buoyant air,  
And stood upon the terrace at her feet.

### 6

Upsprang she then, and kiss'd them and embraced,  
And said ' Lo, here am I, I whom ye mourn.  
I am not dead, nor tortured, nor disgraced,  
But blest above all days since I was born :  
Wherefore be glad. Enter my home and see  
How little cause has been to grieve for me,  
And my desertion on the rocks forlorn.'

## June

7

So entering by the golden gate, or e'er  
The marvel of their hither flight had waned,  
Fresh wonder took them now, for everywhere  
Their eyes that lit on beauty were enchain'd ;  
And Psyche's airy service, as she bade,  
Perform'd its magic office, and display'd  
The riches of the palace where she reign'd.

8

And through the perfumed chambers they were led,  
And bathed therein ; and after, set to sup,  
Were upon dreamlike delicacies fed,  
And wine more precious than its golden cup.  
Till seeing nothing lack'd and naught was theirs,  
Their happiness fell from them unawares,  
And bitter envy in their hearts sprang up.

9

At last one said ' Psyche, since not alone  
Thou livest here in joy, as well we wot,  
Who is the man who should these wonders own,  
Or god, I say, and still appeareth not ?  
What is his name ? What rank and guise hath he,  
Whom winds and spirits serve, who honoureth thee  
Above all others in thy blissful lot ? '

10

But Psyche when that wistful speech she heard  
Was ware of all her spouse had warn'd her of :  
And uttering a disingenuous word,  
Said ' A youth yet unbearded is my love ;  
He goeth hunting on the plains to-day,  
And with his dogs hath wander'd far away ;  
And not till eve can he return above.'

## *Eros & Psyche*

### 11

Then fearing to be nearer plied, she rose  
And brought her richest jewels one by one,  
Bidding them choose and take whate'er they chose ;  
And beckoning the Zephyr spake anon  
That he should waft her sisters to the peak ;  
The which he did, and, ere they more coud speak,  
They rose on high, and in the wind were gone.

### 12

Nor till again they came upon the road,  
Which from the mountain shoulder o'er the plain  
Led to the city of their sire's abode,  
Found they their tongues, though full of high disdain  
Their hearts were, but kept silence, till the strength  
Of pride and envious hatred burst at length  
In voice, and thus the elder gan complain :

### 13

'Cruel and unjust fortune ! that of three  
Sisters, whose being from one fountain well'd,  
Exalts the last so high from her degree,  
And leaves the first to be so far excel'd.  
My husband is a poor and niggard churl  
To him, whoe'er he be, that loves the girl.  
Oh ! in what godlike state her house is held !'

### 14

'Ay,' said the other, 'to a gouty loon  
Am I not wedded? Lo ! thy hurt is mine :  
But never call me woman more, if soon  
I cannot lure her from her height divine.  
Nay, she shall need her cunning wit to save  
The wealth of which so grudgingly she gave ;  
Wherefore thy hand and heart with me combine.

## June

15

'She but received us out of pride, to show  
Her state, well deeming that her happiness  
Was little worth while there was none to know ;  
So is our lot uninjured if none guess.  
Reveal we nothing therefore, but the while  
Together scheme this wanton to beguile,  
And bring her boasting godhead to distress.'

16

So fresh disordering their dress and hair,  
With loud lament they to their sire return,  
Telling they found not Psyche anywhere,  
And of her sure mischance could nothing learn :  
And with that lie the wounded man they slew,  
Hiding the saving truth which well they knew ;  
Nor did his piteous grief their heart concern.

17

Meanwhile her unknown lover did not cease  
To warn poor Psyche how her sisters plan'd  
To undermine her love and joy and peace ;  
And urged how well she might their wiles withstand,  
By keeping them from her delight aloof :  
For better is security than proof,  
And malice held afar than near at hand.

18

'And, dearest wife,' he said, 'since 'tis not long  
Ere one will come to share thy secrecy,  
And be thy babe and mine ; let nothing wrong  
The happy months of thy maternity.  
If thou keep trust, then shalt thou see thy child  
A god ; but if to pry thou be beguiled,  
The lot of both is death and misery.'

## *Eros & Psyche*

19

Then Psyche's simple heart was fill'd with joy,  
And counting to herself the months and days,  
Look'd for the time, when she should bear a boy  
To be her growing stay and godlike praise.  
And 'O be sure,' she said, 'be sure, my pride  
Having so rich a promise cannot slide,  
Even if my love could fail which thee obeys.'

20

And so most happily her life went by,  
In thoughts of love dear to her new estate ;  
Until at length the evil day drew nigh,  
When now her sisters, joined in jealous hate,  
Set forth again, and plotted by the way  
How they might best allure her to betray  
Her secret ; with what lie their angle bait.

21

That night her husband spake to her, and said  
'Psyche, thy sisters come : and when they climb  
The peak they will not tarry to be sped  
Down by the Zephyr, as that other time,  
But winging to the wind will cast themselves  
Out in the air, and on the rocky shelves  
Be dasht, and pay the penalty of crime.

22

'So let it be, and so shall we be saved.'  
Which meditated vengeance of his fear  
When Psyche heard, now for their life she craved,  
Whose mere distress erewhile had toucht her near.  
Around her lover's neck her arms she threw,  
And pleaded for them by her faith so true,  
Although they went on doom in judgment clear,



## June

23

In terror of bloodguiltiness she now  
Forgot all other danger ; she adjured ;  
Or using playfulness deep sobs would plow  
Her soft entreaties, not to be endured :  
Till he at last was fain once more to grant  
The service of the Zephyr, to enchant  
That wicked couple from their fate assured.

24

So ere 'twas noon were noises at the door  
Of knocking loud and voices high in glee ;  
Such as within that vale never before  
Had been, and now seem'd most unmeet to be.  
And Psyche blush'd, though being alone, and rose  
To meet her sisters and herself uncloze  
The gate that made them of her palace free.

25

Fondly she kiss'd them, and with kindly cheer  
Sought to amuse ; and they with outward smile  
O'ermask'd their hate, and called her sweet and dear,  
Finding affection easy to beguile :  
And all was smooth, until at last one said  
'Tell us, I pray, to whom 'tis thou art wed ;  
'Mong gods or men, what is his rank and style ?

26

'Thou canst not think to hide the truth from us,  
Who knew thy peevish sorrows when a maid,  
And see thee now so glad and rapturous,  
As changed from what thou wert as light from shade ;  
Thy jewels, too, the palace of a king,  
Nor least the serviceable spiriting,  
By everything thy secret is betray'd :

## *Eros & Psyche*

27

‘And yet thou talkest of thy wondrous man  
No more than if his face thou didst not know.’  
At which incontinently she began,  
Forgetful of her word a month ago,  
Answering ‘A merchant rich, of middle age,  
My husband is ; and o’er his features sage  
His temples are already touch’d with snow.

28

‘But ’gainst his wish since hither ye were brought  
’Twere best depart.’ Then her accustom’d spell  
Sped them upon the summit quick as thought ;  
And being alone her doing pleased her well :  
So was she vexed to find her love at night  
More sad than ever, of her sisters’ spite  
Speaking as one that could the end foretell.

29

‘And ere long,’ said he, ‘they will spy again :  
Let them be dash’d upon the rocks and die ;  
’Tis they must come to death or thou to pain,  
To separation, Psyche, thou and I ;  
Nay, and our babe to ill. I therefore crave  
Thou wilt not even once more these vipers save,  
Nor to thy love his only boon deny.’

30

But Psyche would not think her sisters’ crime  
So gross and strange, nor could her danger see ;  
Since ’twere so easy, if at any time  
They show’d the venom of their hearts, that she  
Should fan them off upon the willing gust.  
So she refused, and claiming truer trust,  
Would in no wise unto their death agree.

# *Eros & Psyche*

## JULY

### I

'WHAT think you, sister : ' thus one envious fiend  
To other spake upon their homeward route,  
'What of the story that our wit hath glean'd  
Of this mysterious lover, who can shoot  
In thirty days from beardless youth to prime,  
With wisdom in his face before his time,  
And snowy locks upon his head to boot ?'

### 2

'Ay,' said the other, 'true, she lied not well ;  
And thence I gather knows no more than we :  
For surely 'tis a spirit insensible  
To whom she is wedded, one she cannot see.  
'Tis that I fear ; for if 'tis so, her child  
Will be a god, and she a goddess styled,  
Which, though I die to let it, shall not be.

### 3

'Lament we thus no longer. Come, consult  
What may be done.' And home they came at night,  
Yet not to rest, but of their plots occult  
Sat whispering on their beds ; and ere 'twas light  
Resolving on the deed coud not defer ;  
But roused the sleeping house with sudden stir,  
And sallied forth alone to work their spite.

## *Eros & Psyche*

4

And with the noon were climb'd upon the peak,  
And swam down on the Zephyr as before ;  
But now with piercing cry and doleful shriek  
They force their entrance through the golden door,  
Feigning the urgency of bitter truth ;  
Such as deforms a friendly face with ruth,  
When kindness may not hide ill tidings more.

5

Then Psyche when she heard their wailful din,  
And saw their countenances wan and worn  
With travel, vigil, and disfiguring sin,  
Their hair dishevel'd and their habits torn,  
For trembling scarce could ask what ill had hapt ;  
And they alert with joy to see her trapt,  
Launch'd forth amain, and on their drift were borne.

6

'O Psyche, happiest certainly and blest  
Up to this hour,' they said, 'thou surely wert,  
Being of thy fearful peril unpossess ;  
Which now we would not tell but to avert.  
But we in solemn truth thy spouse have found  
To be the dragon of this mountain ground,  
Who holds thee here to work thy shame and hurt.

7

'As yesternight we rode upon the wind  
He issued to pursue us from the wood ;  
We saw his back, that through the tree-tops finn'd,  
His fiery eyes glared from their wrinkl'd hood.  
Lo, now betimes the oracle, which said  
How to the savage beast thou shouldst be wed,  
Is plainly for thy safety understood.

## July

8

'Long time hath he been known to all that dwell  
Upon the plain ; but now his secret lair  
Have we discover'd, which none else could tell :  
Though many women fallen in his snare  
Hath he enchanted ; who, tradition saith,  
Taste love awhile, ere to their cruel death  
They pass in turn upon the summits bare.

9

'Fly with us while thou may'st : no more delay ;  
Renounce the spells of this accursed vale.  
We come to save thee, but we dare not stay ;  
Among these sightless spirits our senses quail.  
Fly with us, fly !' Then Psyche, for her soul  
Was soft and simple, lost her self-control,  
And, thinking only of the horrid tale,

10

'Dear sisters,' said she, and her sobbing speech  
Was broken by her terror, 'it is true  
That much hath hapt to stablsh what ye teach ;  
For ne'er hath it been granted me to view  
My husband ; and, for aught I know, he may  
Be even that cruel dragon, which ye say  
Peer'd at you from the forest to pursue.

11

'Tis sure that scarcely can I win his grace  
To see you here ; and still he mischief vows  
If ever I should ask to see his face,  
Which, coming in the dark, he ne'er allows.  
Therefore, if ye can help, of pity show,  
Since doubt I must, how I may come to know  
What kind of spirit it is that is my spouse.'

## *Eros & Psyche*

12

Then to her cue the younger was afore :  
'Hide thou a razor,' cried she, 'near thy bed ;  
And have a lamp prepared, but whelm thereo'er  
Some cover, that no light be from it shed.  
And when securely in first sleep he lies,  
Look on him well, and ere he can arise,  
Gashing his throat, cut off his hideous head.'

13

Which both persuading, off they flew content,  
Divining that whate'er she was forbid  
Was by her lover for her safety meant,  
Which only could be sure while he was hid.

But Psyche, to that miserable deed  
Being now already in her mind agreed,  
Wander'd alone, and knew not what she did.

14

Now she would trust her lover, now in turn  
Made question of his bidding as unjust ;  
But thirsting curiosity to learn  
His secret overcame her simple trust,  
O'ercame her spoken troth, o'ercame her fear ;  
And she prepared, as now the hour drew near,  
The mean contrivances, nor felt disgust.

15

She set the lamp beneath a chair, and clogged  
Thickly its rebel lustre from the eye :  
And laid the knife, to mortal keenness stroked,  
Within her reach, where she was wont to lie :  
And took her place full early ; but her heart  
Beat fast, and stay'd her breath with sudden start,  
Feeling her lover's arm laid fond thereby.

## July

16

But when at last he slept, then she arose,  
All faint and tremulous : and though it be  
That wrong betrayeth innocence with shews  
Of novelty, its guilt from shame to free,  
Yet 'twas for shame her hand so strangely shook  
That held the steel, and from the cloke that took  
The lamp, and raised it o'er the bed to see.

17

She had some fear she might not well discern  
By that small flame a monster in the gloom ;  
When lo ! the air about her seem'd to burn,  
And bright celestial radiance fill'd the room.  
Too plainly O she saw, O fair to see !  
Eros, 'twas Eros' self, her lover, he,  
The God of love, reveal'd in deathless bloom.

18

Her fainting strength forsook her ; on her knees  
Down by the bed she sank ; the shameless knife  
Fell flashing, and her heart took thought to seize  
Its desperate haft, and end her wicked life.  
Yet could she not her loving eyes withdraw  
From her fair sleeping lover, whom she saw  
Only to know she was no more his wife.

19

O treasure of all treasures, late her own !  
O loss above all losses, lost for aye !  
Since there was no repentance could atone  
For her dishonour, nor her fate withstay.  
But yet 'twas joy to have her love in sight ;  
And, to the rapture yielding while she might,  
She gazed upon his body where he lay.

## *Eros & Psyche*

20

Above all mortal beauty, as was hers,  
She saw a rival ; but if passion's heart  
Be rightly read by subtle questioners,  
It owns a wanton and a gentler part.  
And Psyche wonder'd, noting every sign  
By which the immortal God, her spouse divine,  
Betray'd the image of our earthly art ;

21

His thickly curling hair, his ruddy cheeks,  
And pouting lips, his soft and dimpl'd chin,  
The full and cushion'd eye, that idly speaks  
Of self-content and vanity within,  
The forward, froward ear, and smooth to touch  
His body sleek, but rounded overmuch  
For dignity of mind and pride akin.

22

She noted that the small irradiant wings,  
That from his shoulders lay along at rest,  
Were yet disturb'd with airy quiverings,  
As if some wakeful spirit his blood possest ;  
She feared he was awaking, but they kept  
Their sweet commotion still, and still he slept,  
And still she gazed with never-tiring zest.

23

And now the colour of her pride and joy  
Outflush'd the hue of Eros ; she, so cold,  
To have fired the passion of the heartless boy,  
Whom none in heaven or earth were found to hold !  
Psyche, the earthborn, to be prized above  
The heavenly Graces by the God of love,  
And worshipt by his wantonness untold !



## July

24

Nay, for that very thing she loved him more,  
More than herself her sweet self's complement:  
Until the sight of him again upbore  
Her courage, and renew'd her vigour spent.  
And looking now around, she first espied  
Where at the bed's foot, cast in haste aside,  
Lay his full quiver, and his bow unbent.

25

One of those darts, of which she had heard so oft,  
She took to try if 'twas so very keen ;  
And held its point against her finger soft  
So gently, that to touch it scarce was seen ;  
Yet was she sharply prickt, and felt the fire  
Run through her veins ; and now a strange desire  
Troubl'd her heart, which ne'er before had been :

6

Straight sprang she to her lover on the bed,  
And kisst his cheek, and was not satisfied :  
When, O the lamp, held ill-balanced o'erhead,  
One drop of burning oil spill'd from its side  
On Eros' naked shoulder as he slept,  
Who waken'd by the sudden smart uplept  
Upon the floor, and all the mischief eyed.

27

With nervous speed he seized his bow, and past  
Out of the guilty chamber at a bound ;  
But Psyche, following his flight as fast,  
Caught him, and crying threw her arms around :  
Till coming to the court he rose in air ;  
And she, close clinging in her last despair,  
Was dragg'd, and then lost hold and fell to ground.

## *Eros & Psyche*

28

Wailing she fell ; but he, upon the roof  
Staying his feet, awhile his flight delay'd :  
And turning to her as he stood aloof  
Beside a cypress, whose profoundest shade  
Drank the reflections of the dreamy night  
In its stiff pinnacle, the nimble light  
Of million stars upon his body play'd :

29

' O simple-hearted Psyche,' thus he spake,  
And she upraised her piteous eyes and hands,  
' O simple-hearted Psyche, for thy sake  
I dared to break my mother's stern commands ;  
And gave thee godlike marriage in the place  
Of vilest shame ; and, not to hurt thy grace,  
Spared thee my arrows, which no heart withstands.

30

' But thou, for doubt I was some evil beast,  
Hast mock'd the warnings of my love, to spy  
Upon my secret, which concern'd thee least,  
Seeing that thy joy was never touch'd thereby.  
By faithless prying thou hast work'd thy fall,  
And, even as I foretold thee, lovest all  
For looking on thy happiness too nigh :

31

' Which loss may be thine ample punishment.  
But to those fiends, by whom thou wert misled,  
Go tell each one in turn that I have sent  
This message, that I love her in thy stead ;  
And bid them by their love haste hither soon.'  
Whereat he fled ; and Psyche in a swoon  
Fell back upon the marble floor as dead.

# *Eros & Psyche*

## AUGUST

### I •

WHEN from the lowest ebbing of her blood  
The fluttering pulses thrill'd and swell'd again,  
Her stricken heart recovering force to flood  
With life the sunken conduits of her brain,  
Then Psyche, where she had fallen, numb and cold  
Arose, but scarce her quaking sense control'd,  
Seeing the couch where she that night had lain.

### 2

The level sunbeams search'd the grassy ground  
For diamond dewdrops. Ah! was this the place?  
Where was the court, her home? she look'd around  
And question'd with her memory for a space.  
There was the cypress, there the well-known wood,  
That wall'd the spot: 'twas here her palace stood,  
As surely as 'twas vanish'd without trace.

### 3

Was all a dream? To think that all was dreamt  
Were now the happier thought; but arguing o'er  
That dream it was, she fell from her attempt,  
Feeling the wifely burden that she bore.  
Nay, true, 'twas true. She had had all and lost;  
The joy, the reckless wrong, the heavy cost  
Were hers, the dead end now, and woe in store.

## *Eros & Psyche*

4

What to be done? Fainting and shelterless  
Upon the mountain it were death to bide :  
And harbour knew she none, where her distress  
Might comfort find, or love's dishonour hide ;  
Nor felt she any dread like that of home :  
Yet forth she must, albeit to rove and roam  
An outcast o'er the country far and wide.

5

Anon she marvel'd noting from the vale  
A path lead downward to the plain below,  
Crossing the very site, whereon the pale  
Of all her joy had stood few hours ago ;  
A run of mountain beasts, that keep their track  
Through generations, and for ages back  
Had trod the self-same footing to and fro.

6

That would she try : so forth she took her way,  
Turning her face from the dishonour'd dell,  
Adown the broadening eastward lawns, which lay  
In gentle slant, till suddenly they fell  
In sheer cliff ; whence the path that went around,  
Clomb by the bluffs, or e'er it downward wound  
Beneath that precipice impassable.

7

There once she turn'd, and gazing up the slope  
She bid the scene of all her joy adieu ;  
'Ay, and farewell,' she cried, 'farewell to hope,  
Since there is none will rescue me anew,  
Who have kill'd God's perfection with a doubt.'  
Which said, she took the path that led about,  
And hid the upland pleasance from her view.

## *August*

8

But soon it left her, entering 'neath the shade  
Of cedar old and russeted tall pine,  
Whose mighty tops, seen from the thorny glade,  
Belted the hills about ; and now no sign  
Had she to guide her, save the slow descent.  
But swiftly o'er the springy floor she went,  
And drew the odorous air like draughts of wine.

9

Then next she past a forest thick and dark  
With heavy ilexes and platanes high,  
And came to long lush grass ; and now could mark  
By many a token that the plain was nigh.  
When lo ! a river : to whose brink at last  
Being come, upon the bank her limbs she cast,  
And through her sad tears watch'd the stream go by.

10

And now the thought came o'er her that in death  
There was a cure for sorrow, that before  
Her eyes ran Lethe, she might take one breath  
Of water and be freed for evermore.  
Leaning to look into her tomb, thereon  
She saw the horror of her image wan,  
And up she rose at height to leap from shore.

11

When suddenly a mighty voice, that fell  
With fury on her ears, their sense to scare,  
That bounding from the tree trunks like the yell  
Of hundred brazen trumpets, cried ' Forbear !  
Forbear, fond maid, that froward step to take,  
For life can cure the ills that love may make ;  
But for the harm of death is no repair.'

## *Eros & Psyche*

12

Then looking up she saw an uncouth form  
Perch'd on the further bank, whose parted lips  
Volley'd their friendly warning in a storm :  
A man he might have been, but for the tips  
Of horns appearing from his shaggy head,  
For o'er his matted beard his face was red,  
And all his shape was manlike to the hips.

13

In forehead low, keen eye, and nostril flat  
He bore the human grace in mean degree,  
But, set beneath his body squat and fat,  
Legs like a goat's, and from the hairy knee  
The shank fell spare ; and, though crosswise he put  
His limbs in careful posture, for the foot  
The beast's divided hoof was plain to see.

14

Him then she knew the mighty choric God,  
The great hill-haunting and tree-loving Pan ;  
Whom Zeus had laught to see when first he trod  
Olympus, neither god nor beast nor man :  
Who every rocky peak and snowy crest  
Of the Aspran mountains for his own possest,  
And all their alps with bacchic rout o'erran :

15

Whom, when his pipe he plays on loud and sweet,  
And o'er the fitted reeds his moist lip flees,  
Around in measured step with nimble feet  
Water-nymphs dance and Hamadryades :  
And all the woodland's airy folk, who shun  
Man's presence, to his frolic pastime run  
From their perennial wells and sacred trees.

## *August*

16

Now on his knee his pipe laid by, he spoke  
With flippant tongue, wounding unwittingly  
The heart he sought to cheer with jest and joke.  
'And what hast thou to do with misery,'  
He said, 'who hast such beauty as might gain  
The love of Eros? Cast away thy pain,  
And give thy soul to mirth and jollity.

17

'Thy mortal life is but a brittle vase,  
But as thee list with wine or tears to fill ;  
For all the drops therein are Ohs and Ahs  
Of joy or grief according to thy will ;  
And wouldst thou learn of me my merry way,  
I'd teach thee change thy lover every day,  
And prize the cup that thou wert fain to spill.

18

'Nay, if thou plunge thou shalt not drown nor sink,  
For I will to thee o'er the stream afloat,  
And bear thee safe ; and O I know a drink  
For care, that makes sweet music in the throat.  
Come live with me, my love ; I'll cure thy chance :  
For I can laugh and quaff, and pipe and dance,  
Swim like a fish, and caper like a goat.'

19

Speaking, his brute divinity explored  
The secret of her silence ; and old Pan  
Grew kind and told her of a shallow ford  
Where lower down the stream o'er pebbles ran,  
And one might pass at ease with ankles dry :  
Whither she went, and crossing o'er thereby,  
Her lonely wanderings through the isle began.

## *Eros & Psyche*

20

· But none could tell, no, nor herself had told  
Where food she found, or shelter through the land  
By day or night ; until by fate control'd  
She came by steep ways to the southern strand,  
Where, sacred to the Twins and Britomart,  
Pent in its rocky theatre apart,  
A little town stood on the level sand.

21

'Twas where her younger sister's husband reign'd :  
And Psyche to the palace gate drew near,  
Helplessly still by Eros' hest constrain'd,  
And knocking begg'd to see her sister dear ;  
But when in state stepp'd down that haughty queen,  
And saw the wan face spent with tears and teen,  
She smiled, and said ' Psyche, what dost thou here ? '

22

Then Psyche told how, having well employ'd  
Their means, and done their bidding not amiss,  
Looking on him her hand would have destroy'd,  
'Twas Eros ; whom in love leaning to kiss,  
Even as she kisst, a drop of burning oil  
Fall'n from the lamp had served her scheme to foil,  
Discovering her in vision of her bliss ;

23

Wherewith the god stung, like a startled bird  
Arose in air, and she fell back in swoon ;  
' But ere he parted,' said she, ' he confer'd  
On thee the irrecoverable boon  
By prying lost to me : *Go tell*, he said,  
*Thy sister that I love her in thy stead,*  
*And bid her by her love haste hither soon.'*



## August

24

Which when that heart of malice heard, it took  
The jealous fancy of her silly lust :  
And pitilessly with triumphant look  
She drank the flattery, and gave full trust ;  
And leaving Psyche ere she more coud tell,  
Ran off to bid her spouse for aye farewell,  
And in his ear this ready lie she thrust :

25

‘ My dearest sister Psyche, she whose fate  
We mourn’d, hath reappear’d alive and hale,  
But brings sad news ; my father dies : full late  
These tidings come, but love may yet avail ;  
Let me be gone.’ And stealing blind consent,  
Forth on that well-remember’d road she went,  
And climb’d upon the peak above the dale.

26

There on the topmost rock, where Psyche first  
Had by her weeping sire been left to die,  
She stood a moment, in her hope accurst  
Being happy ; and the cliffs took up her cry  
With chuckling mockery from her tongue above,  
*Zephyr, sweet Zephyr, waft me to my love !*  
When off she lept upon his wings to fly.

27

But as a dead stone, from a height let fall,  
Silent and straight is gather’d by the force  
Of earth’s vast mass upon its weight so small,  
In speed increasing as it nears its source  
Of motion—by which law all things soe’er  
Are clutch’d and dragg’d and held—so fell she there,  
Like a dead stone, down in her headlong course.

## *Eros & Psyche*

28

The disregardful silence heard her strike  
Upon the solid crags ; her dismal shriek  
Rang on the rocks and died out laughter-like  
Along the vale in hurried trebles weak ;  
And soon upon her, from their skiey haunt  
Fell to their feast the great birds bald and gaunt  
And gorged on her fair flesh with bloody beak.

29

But Psyche, when her sister was gone forth,  
Went out again her wandering way to take :  
And following a stream that led her north,  
After some days she pass'd the Corian Lake,  
Whereby Athena's temple stands, and he  
Who traverses the isle from sea to sea  
May by the plain his shortest journey make :

30

Till on the northern coast arrived she came  
Upon a city built about a port,  
The which she knew, soon as she heard the name,  
Was where her elder sister had her court ;  
To whom, as Eros had commanded her,  
She now in turn became the messenger  
Of vengeful punishment, that fell not short :

31

For she too hearing gan her heart exalt,  
Nor pity felt for Psyche's tears and moans,  
But, fellow'd with that other in her fault,  
Follow'd her to her fate upon the stones ;  
And from the peak leaping like her below  
The self-same way unto the self-same woe,  
Lay dasht to death upon her sister's bones.

## THIRD QUARTER

### A U T U M N

#### PSYCHE'S WANDERINGS

### SEPTEMBER

#### I

ON the Hellenic board of Crete's fair isle,  
Westward of Drepanon, along a reach  
Which massy Cyamum for many a mile  
Jutting to sea delivers from the breach  
Of North and East,—returning to embay  
The favour'd shore—an ancient city lay,  
Aptera, which is *Wingless* in our speech.

#### 2

And hence the name ; that here in rocky cove,  
Thence called Museion, was the trial waged  
What day the Sirens with the Muses strove,  
By jealous Hera in that war engaged :  
Wherein the daughters of Mnemosynè  
O'ercame the chauntresses who vex'd the sea,  
Nor vengeance spared them by their pride enraged.

## *Eros & Psyche*

### 3

For those strange creatures, who with women's words  
And wiles made ravenous prey of passers-by,  
Were throated with the liquid pipe of birds :  
Of love they sang ; and none, who sail'd anigh  
Through the grey hazes of the cyanine sea,  
Had wit the whirlpool of that song to flee,  
Nor fear'd the talon hook'd and feather'd thigh.

### 4

But them the singers of the gods o'ercame,  
And pluck'd them of their plumage, where in fright  
They vainly flutter'd off to hide their shame,  
Upon two rocks that lie within the bight,  
Under the headland, barren and alone ;  
Which, being with the scatter'd feathers strewn,  
Were by the folk named Leukæ, which is *White*.

### 5

Thereon about this time the snowy gull,  
Minion of Aphrodite, being come,  
Plumed himself, standing on the sea-wrack dull,  
That drifted from the foot of Cyamum ;  
And 'twas his thought, that had the goddess learnt  
The tale of Psyche loved and Eros burnt,  
She ne'er so long had kept aloof and dumb.

### 6

Wherefore that duteous gossip of Love's queen  
Devised that he the messenger would be ;  
And rising from the rock, he skim'd between  
The chasing waves—such grace have none but he ;—  
Into the middle deep then down he dived,  
And rowing with his glistening wings arrived  
At Aphrodite's bower beneath the sea.

## September

7

The eddies from his silver pinions swirl'd  
The crimson, green, and yellow floss, that grew  
About the caves, and at his passing curl'd  
Its graceful silk, and gently waved anew :  
Till, oaring here and there, the queen he found  
Stray'd from her haunt unto a sandy ground,  
Dappl'd with eye-rings in the sunlight blue.

8

She, as he came upon her from above,  
With Hora play'd ; Hora, her herald fair,  
That lays the soft necessity of Love  
On maidens' eyelids, and with tender care  
Marketh the hour, as in all works is fit :  
And happy they in love who time outwit,  
Fondly constrain'd in her season rare.

9

But he with garrulous and laughing tongue  
Broke up his news ; how Eros, fallen sick,  
Lay tossing on his bed, to frenzy stung  
By such a burn as did but barely prick :  
A little bleb, no bigger than a pease,  
Upon his shoulder 'twas, that kill'd his ease,  
Fever'd his heart, and made his breathing thick.

10

' For which disaster hath he not been seen  
This many a day at all in any place :  
And thou, dear mistress,' piped he, ' hast not been  
Thyself amongst us now a dreary space :  
The pining mortals suffer from a dearth  
Of love ; and for this sadness of the earth  
Thy family is darken'd with disgrace.

## *Eros & Psyche*

11

'Now on the secret paths of dale and wood,  
Where lovers walk'd are lovers none to find :  
And friends, besworn to equal brotherhood,  
Forget their faith, and part with words unkind :  
In the first moon thy honey-bond is loath'd :  
And I could tell even of the new-betroth'd  
That fly o'ersea, and leave their loves behind.

12

'Summer is over, but the merry pipe,  
That wont to cheer the harvesting, is mute :  
And in the vineyards, where the grape is ripe,  
No voice is heard of them that take the fruit.  
No workman singeth at eve nor maiden danceth :  
All joy is dead, and as the year advanceth  
The signs of woe increase on man and brute.

13

'Tis plain that if thy pleasure longer pause,  
Thy mighty rule on earth hath seen its day :  
The race must come to perish, and no cause  
But that thou sittest with thy nymphs at play,  
While on a Cretan hill thy truant boy  
Hath with his pretty mistress turn'd to toy,  
And less for pain than love pineth away.'

14

'Ha ! Mistress !' cried she ; 'Hath my beardless son  
Been hunting for himself his lovely game ?  
Some young Orestiad hath his fancy won ?  
Some Naiad ? say ; or is a Grace his flame ?  
Or maybe Muse, and then 'tis Erato,  
The trifling wanton. Tell me, if thou know,  
Woman or goddess is she ? and her name.'

## September

15

Then said the snowy gull, 'O heavenly queen,  
What is my knowledge, who am but a bird?  
Yet is she only mortal, as I ween,  
And namèd Psyche, if I rightly heard.'—  
But Aphrodite's look daunted his cheer,  
Ascared he fled away, screaming in fear,  
To see what wrath his simple tale had stirr'd.

16

He flasht his pens, and sweeping widely round  
Tower'd to air; so swift in all his way,  
That whence he dived he there again was found  
As soon as if he had but dipt for prey:  
And now, or e'er he join'd his wailful flock,  
Once more he stood upon the Sirens' rock,  
And preen'd his ruff'd quills for fresh display.

17

But as ill tidings will their truth assure  
Without more witness than their fatal sense,  
So, since was nothing bitterer to endure,  
The injured goddess guess'd the full offence:  
And doubted only whether first to smite  
Or Psyche for her new presumptuous flight,  
Or Eros for his disobedience.

18

But full of anger to her son she went,  
And found him in his golden chamber laid;  
And with him sweet Euphrosynè, attent  
Upon his murmur'd wants, aye as he bade  
Shifted the pillows with each fretful whim;  
But scornfully his mother look'd at him,  
And reckless of his pain gan thus upbraid:

## *Eros & Psyche*

19

‘O worthy deeds, I say, and true to blood,  
The crown and pledge of promise ! thou that wast  
In estimation my perpetual bud,  
Now fruiting thus untimely to my cost ;  
Backsliding from commandment, ay, and worse,  
With bliss to favour one I bade thee curse,  
And save the life I left with thee for lost !

20

‘Thou too to burn with love, and love of her  
Whom I did hate ; and to thy bed to take  
My rival, that my trusted officer  
Might of mine enemy my daughter make !  
Dost thou then think my love for thee so fond,  
And miserably doting, that the bond  
By such dishonour strainèd will not break ?

21

‘Or that I cannot bear another son  
As good as thou ; or, if I choose not bear,  
Not beg as good a lusty boy of one  
Of all my nymphs,—and some have boys to spare,—  
Whom I might train, to whom thine arms made o’er  
Should do me kinder service than before,  
To smite my foes and keep my honour fair ?

22

‘For thou hast ever mockt me, and beguiled  
In amours strange my God, thy valiant sire :  
And having smirch’d our fame while yet a child  
Wilt further foul it now with earthly fire.  
But I—do as thou may—have vow’d to kill  
Thy fancied girl, whether thou love her still,  
Or of her silly charms already tire.



## September

23

'Tell me but where she hides.' And Eros now,  
Proud in his woe, boasted his happy theft :  
Confessing he had loved her well, and how  
By her own doing she was lost and left ;  
And homeless in such sorrow as outwent  
The utmost pain of other punishment,  
Was wandering of his love and favour reft.

24

By which was Cypris gladden'd, not appeased,  
But hid her joy and spake no more her threat :  
And left with face like one that much displeased  
Hath yet betray'd that he can wrong forget.

When lo ! as swiftly she came stepping down  
From her fair house into the heavenly town  
The Kronian sisters on the way she met ;

25

Hera, the Wife of Zeus, her placid front  
Dark with the shadow of his troubl'd reign,  
And tall Demeter, who with men once wont,  
Holding the high Olympians in disdain  
For Persephassa's rape ; which now forgiven,  
She had return'd unto the courts of Heaven,  
And 'mong the immortals liv'd at peace again :

26

Whose smile told Aphrodite that they knew  
The meaning of her visit ; and a flush  
Of anger answer'd them, while hot she grew.  
But Hera laugh'd outright : ' Why thou dost blush !  
Now see we modest manners on my life !  
And all thy little son has got a wife  
Can make the crimson to thy forehead rush.

## *Eros & Psyche*

27

'Didst think he, whom thou madest passion's prince,  
No privy dart then for himself would poise?  
Nay, by the cuckoo on my sceptre, since  
'Twas love that made thee mother of his joys,  
Art thou the foremost to his favour bound;  
As thou shouldst be the last to think to sound  
The heart, and least of all thy wanton boy's.'

28

But her Demeter, on whose stalwart arm  
She lean'd, took up: 'If thou wilt hark to me,  
This Psyche,' said she, 'hath the heavenly charm,  
And will become immortal. And maybe  
To marry with a woman is as well  
As wed a god and live below in Hell:  
As 'twas my lot in child of mine to see.'

29

Which things they both said, fearing in their hearts  
That savage Eros, if they mockt his case,  
Would kill their peace with his revengeful darts,  
And bring them haply to a worse disgrace:  
But Aphrodite, saying 'Good! my dames;  
Behind this smoke I see the spite that flames,'  
Left them, and on her journey went apace.

30

For having purposed she would hold no truce  
With Psyche or her son, 'twas in her mind  
To go forthwith unto the throne of Zeus,  
And beg that Hermes might be sent to find  
The wanderer; and secure that in such quest  
He would not fail, she ponder'd but how best  
She might inflict her vengeance long-design'd.

# *Eros & Psyche*

## OCTOBER

### I

HEAVY meanwhile at heart, with bruised feet  
Was Psyche wandering many nights and days  
Upon the paths of hundred-citied Crete,  
And chose to step the most deserted ways ;  
Being least unhappy when she went unseen ;  
Since else her secret sorrow had no screen  
From the plain question of men's idle gaze.

### 2

Yet wheresoe'er she went one hope she had ;  
Like mortal mourners, who 'gainst reason strong  
Hope to be unexpectedly made glad  
With sight of their dead friends, so much they long ;  
So she for him, whom loss a thousandfold  
Endear'd and made desired ; nor could she hold  
He would not turn and quite forgive her wrong.

### 3

Wherefore her eager eyes in every place  
Lookt for her lover ; and 'twixt hope and fear  
She follow'd oft afar some form of grace,  
In pain alike to lose or venture near.  
And still this thought cheer'd her fatigue, that he,  
Or on some hill, or by some brook or tree,  
But waited for her coming to appear.

## *Eros & Psyche*

4

And then for comfort many an old love-crost  
And doleful ditty would she gently sing,  
Writ by sad poets of a lover lost,  
Now sounding sweeter for her sorrowing :  
*Echo, sweet Echo, watching up on high,*  
*Say hast thou seen to-day my love go by,*  
*Or where thou sittest by thy mossy spring?*

5

*Or say ye nymphs, that from the crystal rills,*  
*When ye have bathed your limbs from morn till eve,*  
*Flying at midnight to the bare-topt hills,*  
*Beneath the stars your mazy dances weave,*  
*Say, my deserter whom ye well may know*  
*By his small wings, his quiver, and his bow,*  
*Say, have ye seen my love, whose loss I grieve?*

6

Till climb'd one evening on a rocky steep  
Above the plain of Cisamos, that lay,  
Robb'd of its golden harvest, in the deep  
Mountainous shadows of the dying day,  
She saw a temple, whose tall columns fair  
Recall'd her home ; and ' O if thou be there,  
My love,' she cried, ' fly not again away.'

7

Swiftly she ran, and entering by the door  
She stood alone within an empty fane  
Of great Demeter : and, behold, the floor  
Was litter'd with thank-offerings of grain,  
With wheat and barley-sheaves together heapt  
In holy harvest-home of them that reap  
The goddess plenteous gifts upon the plain ;

## October

8

And on the tithe the tackle of the tithe  
Thrown by in such confusion, as are laid  
Upon the swath sickle, and hook, and scythe,  
When midday drives the reapers to the shade.  
And Psyche, since had come no priestess there  
To trim the temple, in her pious care  
Forgot herself, and lent her duteous aid.

9

She drew the offerings from the midst aside,  
And piled the sheaves at every pillar's base ;  
And sweeping therebetween a passage wide,  
Made clear of corn and chaff the temple space :  
As countrymen who bring their wheat to mart,  
Set out their show along the walls apart  
By their allotted stations, each in place ;

10

Thus she, and felt no weariness,—such strength  
Hath duty to support our feeble frame,—  
Till all was set in order, and at length  
Up to the threshold of the shrine she came :  
When lo ! before her face with friendly smile,  
Tall as a pillar of the peristyle,  
The goddess stood reveal'd, and call'd her name.

11

'Unhappy Psyche,' said she, 'know'st thou not  
How Aphrodite to thy hurt is sworn ?  
And thou, thy peril and her wrath forgot,  
Spendest thy thought my temple to adorn.  
Take better heed !'—And Psyche, at the voice  
Even of so little comfort, gan rejoice,  
And at her feet pour'd out this prayer forlorn.

## *Eros & Psyche*

12

'O Gracious giver of the golden grain,  
Hide me, I pray thee, from her wrath unkind ;  
For who can pity as canst thou my pain,  
Who wert thyself a wanderer, vex'd in mind  
For loss of thy dear Corè once, whenas,  
Ravisht to hell by fierce Agesilas,  
Thou soughtest her on earth and coudst not find.

13

'How coud thy feet bear thee to western night,  
And where swart Libyans watch the sacred tree,  
And thrice to ford o'er Achelous bright,  
And all the streams of beauteous Sicily ?  
And thrice to Enna cam'st thou, thrice, they tell,  
Satest athirst by Callichorus' well,  
Nor tookest of the spring to comfort thee.

14

'By that remember'd anguish of thine heart,  
Lady, have pity even on me, and show  
Where I may find my love ; and take my part  
For peace, I pray, against my cruel foe :  
Or if thou canst not from her anger shield,  
Here let me lie among the sheaves conceal'd  
Such time till forth I may in safety go.'

15

Demeter answer'd, 'Nay, though thou constrain  
My favour with thy plea, my help must still  
Be hidden, else I work for thee in vain  
To thwart my mighty sister in her will.  
Thou must fly hence : Yet though I not oppose,  
Less will I aid her ; and if now I close  
My temple doors to thee, take it not ill.'

## October

16

Then Psyche's hope founder'd ; as when a ship,  
The morrow of the gale can hardly ride  
The swollen seas, fetching a deeper dip  
At every wave, and through her gaping side  
And o'er her shattered bulwark ever drinks,  
Till plunging in the watery wild she sinks,  
To scoop her grave beneath the crushing tide :

17

So with each word her broken spirit drank  
Its doom ; and overwhelm'd with deep despair  
She turn'd away, and coming forth she sank  
Silently weeping on the temple stair,  
In midmost night, forspent with long turmoil :  
But sleep, the gracious pursuivant of toil,  
Came swiftly down, and nursed away her care.

18

And when the sun awaked her with his beams  
She found new hope, that still her sorrow's cure  
Lay with the gods, who in her morning dreams  
Had sent her comfort in a vision sure ;  
Wherein the Cretan-born, almightiest god,  
Cloud-gathering Zeus himself had seem'd to nod,  
And bid her with good heart her woes endure.

19

So coming that same day unto a shrine  
Of Hera, she took courage and went in :  
And like to one that to the cell divine  
For favour ventures or a suit to win,  
She drew anigh the altar, from her face  
Wiping the tears, ere to the heavenly grace,  
As thus she pray'd, she would her prayer begin.

## *Eros & Psyche*

20

‘Most honour’d Lady, who from ancient doom  
Wert made heaven’s wife, and art on earth besought  
With gracious happiness of all to whom  
Thy holy wedlock hath my burden brought,  
Save me from Aphrodite’s fell pursuit,  
And guard unto the birth Love’s hapless fruit,  
Which she for cruel spite would bring to nought.

21

‘As once from her thou wert not shamed to take  
Her beauty’s zone, thy beauty to enhance ;  
For which again Zeus loved thee, to forsake  
His warlike ire in faithful dalliance ;  
Show me what means may win my Love to me,  
Or how that I may come, if so may be,  
Within the favour of his countenance.

22

‘If there be any place for tears or prayer,  
If there be need for succour in distress,  
Now is the very hour of all despair,  
Here is the heart of grief and bitterness.  
Motherly pity, bend thy face and grant  
One beam of ruth to thy poor suppliant,  
Nor turn me from thine altar comfortless.’

23

Even as she pray’d a cloud spread through the cell,  
And ’mid the wreathings of the vapour dim  
The goddess grew in glory visible,  
Like some barbaric queen in festal trim ;  
Such the attire and ornaments she wore,  
When o’er the forgèd threshold of the floor  
Of Zeus’s house she stept to visit him.



## October

24

From either ear, ring'd to its piercèd lobe  
A triple jewel hung, with gold enchas't ;  
And o'er her breasts her wide ambrosial robe  
With many a shining golden clasp was brac't ;  
The flowering on its smooth embroider'd lawn  
Gather'd to colour where the zone was drawn  
In fringe of golden tassels at her waist.

25

Her curling hair with plaited braid and braid,  
Pendant or loop'd about her head divine,  
Lay hidden half beneath a golden veil,  
Bright as the rippling ocean in sunshine :  
And on the ground, flashing whene'er she stept,  
Beneath her feet the dazzling lightnings leapt  
From the gold network of her sandals fine.

26

Thus Hera stood in royal guise bedeckt  
Before poor Psyche on the stair that knelt,  
Whose new-nursed hope at that display was checkt  
And all her happier thoughts gan fade and melt.  
She saw no kindness in such haughty mien,  
And venturing not to look upon the queen,  
Bow'd down in woe to hear her sentence dealt.

27

And thus the goddess spake, ' In vain thou suest,  
Most miserable Psyche ; though my heart  
Be full of hate for her whose hate thou ruest,  
And pride and pity move me to thy part :  
Yet not till Zeus make known his will, coud I,  
Least of the blameless gods that dwell on high,  
Assist thee, wert thou worthier than thou art.

## *Eros & Psyche*

28

'But know if Eros love thee, that thy hopes  
Should rest on him ; and I would bid thee go  
Where in his mother's house apart he mopes  
Grieving for loss of thee in secret woe :  
For should he take thee back, there is no power  
In earth or heaven will hurt thee from that hour,  
Nay, not if Zeus himself should prove thy foe.'

29

Thus saying she was gone, and Psyche now  
Surprised by comfort rose and went her way,  
Resolved in heart, and only wondering how  
'Twas possible to come where Eros lay ;  
Since that her feet, however she might roam,  
Could never travel to the heavenly home  
Of Love, beyond the bounds of mortal day :

30

Yet must she come to him. And now 'twas proved  
How that to Lovers, as is told in song,  
Seeking the way no place is far removed ;  
Nor is there any obstacle so strong,  
Nor bar so fix'd that it can hinder them :  
And how to reach heaven's gate by stratagem  
Vex'd not the venturous heart of Psyche long.

31

To face her enemy might well avail :  
Wherefore to Cypris' shrine her steps she bent,  
Hoping the goddess in her hate might hale  
Her body to the skies for punishment,  
Whate'er to be ; yet now her fiercest wrath  
Seem'd happiest fortune, seeing 'twas the path  
Whereby alone unto her love she went.

# *Eros & Psyche*

## NOVEMBER

### I

BUT Aphrodite to the house of Zeus  
Being bound, bade beckon out her milkwhite steeds,  
Four doves, that ready to her royal use  
In golden cages stood and peck'd the seeds :  
Best of the nimble air's high-sailing folk  
That wore with pride the marking of her yoke,  
And cooed in envy of her gentle needs.

### 2

These drew in turn her chariot, when in state  
Along the heaven with all her train she fared ;  
And oft in journeying to the skiey gate  
Of Zeus's palace high their flight had dared,  
Which darkest vapour and thick glooms enshroud  
Above all else in the perpetual cloud,  
Wherethro' to mount again they stood prepared,

### 3

Sleeking their feathers, by her shining car ;  
The same Hephæstos wrought for her, when he,  
Bruised in his hideous fall from heaven afar,  
Was nursed by Thetis, and Eurynomè,  
The daughter of the ever-refluent main ;  
With whom he dwelt till he grew sound again,  
Down in a hollow cave beside the sea :

## *Eros & Psyche*

4

And them for kindness done was prompt to serve,  
Forging them brooches rich in make and mode,  
Earrings, and supple chains of jointed curve,  
And other trinkets, while he there abode :  
And none of gods or men knew of his home,  
But they two only ; and the salt sea-foam  
To and fro past his cavern ever flow'd.

5

'Twas then he wrought this work within the cave,  
Emboss'd with rich design, a moonèd car ;  
And when return'd to heaven to Venus gave,  
In form imagined like her crescent star ;  
Which circling nearest earth, maketh at night  
To wakeful mortal men shadow and light  
Alone of all the stars in heaven that are.

6

Two slender wheels it had, with fretted tires  
Of biting adamant, to take firm hold  
Of cloud or ether ; and their whirling fires  
Threw off the air in halo where they roll'd :  
And either nave that round the axle turn'd  
A ruby was, whose steady crimson burn'd  
Betwixt the twin speed-mingling fans of gold.

7

Thereon the naked goddess mounting, shook  
The reins ; whereat the doves their wings outspread,  
And rising high their flight to heaven they took :  
And all the birds, that in those courts were bred,  
Of her broad eaves the nested families,  
Sparrows and swallows, join'd their companies  
Awhile and twitter'd to her overhead.

# November

8

But onward she with fading tracks of flame  
Sped swiftly, till she reacht her journey's end :  
And when within the house of Zeus she came,  
She pray'd the Sire of Heaven that he would lend  
Hermes, the Argus-slayer, for her hest ;  
And he being granted her at her request,  
She went forthwith to seek him and to send.

9

Who happ'd within the palace then to wait  
Upon the almighty pleasure ; and her tale  
Was quickly told, and he made answer straight  
That he would find the truant without fail ;  
Asking the goddess by what signs her slave  
Might best be known, and what the price she gave  
For capture, or admitted for the bail.

10

All which he took his silver stile to write  
In letters large upon a waxèd board ;  
Her age and name, her colour, face and height,  
Her home, and parentage, and the reward :  
And then read o'er as 'twas to be proclaim'd.  
And she took oath to give the price she named,  
Without demur, when Psyche was restored.

11

Then on his head he closely set his cap  
With earèd wings erect, and o'er his knee  
He cross'd each foot in turn to prove the strap  
That bound his wingèd sandals, and shook free  
His chlamys, and gat up, and in his hand  
Taking his fair white-ribbon'd herald's wand,  
Lept forth on air, accoutred cap-a-pè.

## *Eros & Psyche*

12

And piloting along the mid-day sky,  
Held southward, till the narrow map of Crete  
Lay like a fleck in azure 'neath his eye ;  
When down he came, and as an eagle fleet  
Drops in some combe, then checks his headlong stoop  
With wide-flung wing, wheeling in level swoop  
To strike the bleating quarry with his feet,

13

Thus he alighted ; and in every town  
In all the isle before the close of day  
Had cried the message, which he carried down,  
Of Psyche, Aphrodite's runaway ;  
That whosoever found the same and caught,  
And by such time unto her temple brought,  
To him the goddess would this guerdon pay :

14

SIX HONIED KISSES FROM HER ROSY MOUTH  
WOULD CYTHEREA GIVE, AND ONE BESIDE  
TO QUENCH AT HEART FOR AYE LOVE'S MORTAL DROUTH :  
BUT UNTO HIM THAT HID HER, WOE BETIDE !  
Which now was on all tongues, and Psyche's name  
Herself o'erheard, or ever nigh she came  
To Aphrodite's temple where she hied.

15

When since she found her way to heaven was safe,  
She only wisht to make it soon and sure ;  
Nor fear'd to meet the goddess in her chafe,  
So she her self-surrender might secure,  
And not be given of other for the price ;  
Nor was there need of any artifice  
Her once resplendent beauty to obscure.

## November

16

For now so changed she was by heavy woe,  
That for the little likeness that she bore  
To her description she was fear'd to go  
Within the fane ; and when she stood before  
The priestess, scarce could she with oath persuade  
That she was Psyche, the renownèd maid,  
Whom men had left the temple to adore.

17

But when to Hermes she was shown and given,  
He took no doubt, but eager to be quit,  
And proud of speed, return'd with her to heaven,  
And left her with the proclamation writ,  
Hung at her neck, the board with letters large,  
At Aphrodite's gate with those in charge ;  
And up whence first he came made haste to flit.

18

But hapless Psyche fell, for so it chanced,  
To moody SYNETHEA's care, the one  
Of Aphrodite's train whom she advanced  
To try the work abandon'd by her son.  
Who by perpetual presence made ill end  
Of good or bad ; though she could both amend,  
And merit praise for work by her begun.

19

But she to better thought her heart had shut,  
And proved she had a spite beyond compare :  
Nor could the keenest taunts her anger glut,  
Which she when sour'd was never wont to spare :  
And now she mock'd at Psyche's shame and grief,  
As only she might do, and to her chief  
Along the courtyard dragg'd her by the hair.

## *Eros & Psyche*

20

Nor now was Aphrodite kinder grown :  
Having her hated rival in her power,  
She laught for joy, and in triumphant tone  
Bade her a merry welcome to her bower :  
‘Tis fit indeed daughters-in-law should wait  
Upon their mothers ; but thou comest late,  
Psyche ; I lookt for thee before this hour.

21

‘ And yet,’ thus gave she rein to jeer and gibe,  
‘ Forgive me if I held thee negligent,  
Or if accusom’d vanity ascribe  
An honour to myself that was not meant.  
Thy lover is it, who so dearly prized  
The pretty soul, then left her and despised ?  
To him more like thy heavenward steps were bent :

22

‘ Nor without reason : Zeus, I tell thee, swoon’d  
To hear the story of the drop of oil,  
The revelation and the ghastly wound :  
My merriment is but my fear’s recoil.  
But if my son was unkind, thou shalt see  
How kind a goddess can his mother be  
To bring thy tainted honour clear of soil.’

23

And so, to match her promise with her mirth,  
Two of her ministers she call’d in ken,  
That work the melancholy of the earth ;  
MERIMNA that with care perplexes, when  
The hearts of mortals have the gods forgot,  
And LYPÈ, that her sorrow spares them not,  
When mortals have forgot their fellow men.



## November

24

These, like twin sharks that in a fair ship's wake  
Swim constant, showing 'bove the water blue  
Their shearing fins, and hasty ravin make  
Of overthrow or offal, so these two  
On Aphrodite's passing follow hard ;  
And now she offer'd to their glut's regard  
Sweet Psyche, with command their wont to do.

25

But in what secret chamber their foul task  
These soul-tormentors plied, or what their skill,  
Pity of tender nature may not ask,  
Nor poet stain his rhyme with such an ill.  
But they at last themselves turn'd from their rack,  
Weary of cruelty, and led her back,  
Saying that further torture were to kill.

26

Then when the goddess saw her, more she mockt  
'Art thou the woman of the earth,' she said,  
'That hast in sorceries mine Eros lockt,  
And stood thyself for worship in my stead ?  
Looking that I should pity thee, or care  
For what illicit offspring thou may'st bear ;  
Or let thee to that god my son be wed ?

27

'I know thy trick ; and thou art one of them  
Who steal love's favour in the gentle way,  
Wearing submission for a diadem,  
Patience and suffering for thy rich array :  
Thou wilt be modest, kind, implicit, so  
To rest thy wily spirit out of show  
That it may leap the livelier into play :

## *Eros & Psyche*

28

'Devout at doing nothing, if so be  
The grace become thee well ; but active yet  
Above all others be there none to see  
Thy business, and thine eager face asweat.  
Lo ! I will prove thy talent : thou may'st live,  
And all that thou desirest will I give,  
If thou perform the task which I shall set.'

29

She took her then aside, and bade her heed  
A heap of grains piled high upon the floor,  
Millet and mustard, hemp and poppy seed,  
And fern-bloom's undistinguishable spore,  
All kinds of pulse, of grasses, and of spice,  
Clover and linseed, rape, and corn, and rice,  
Dodder, and sesame, and many more.

30

'Sort me these seeds' she said ; 'it now is night,  
I will return at morning ; if I find  
That thou hast separated all aright,  
Each grain from other grain after its kind,  
And set them in unmingl'd heaps apart,  
Then shall thy wish be granted to thine heart.  
Whereat she turn'd, and closed the door behind.

## FOURTH QUARTER

### W I N T E R

#### PSYCHE'S TRIALS AND RECEPTION INTO HEAVEN

### DECEMBER

#### I

A SINGLE lamp there stood beside the heap,  
And shed thereon its mocking golden light;  
Such as might tempt the weary eye to sleep  
Rather than prick the nerve of taskèd sight.  
Yet Psyche, not to fail for lack of zeal,  
With good will sat her down to her ordeal,  
Sorting the larger seeds as best she might.

#### 2

When lo ! upon the wall, a shadow past  
Of doubtful shape, across the chamber dim  
Moving with speed : and seeing nought that cast  
The shade, she bent her down the flame to trim ;  
And there the beast itself, a little ant,  
Climb'd up in compass of the lustre scant,  
Upon the bowl of oil ran round the rim.

## *Eros & Psyche*

### 3

Smiling to see the creature of her fear  
So dwarf'd by truth, she watcht him where he crept,  
For mere distraction telling in his ear  
What straits she then was in, and telling wept.  
Whereat he stood and trim'd his horns ; but ere  
Her tale was done resumed his manner scare,  
Ran down, and on his way in darkness kept.

### 4

But she intent drew forth with dextrous hand  
The larger seeds, or push'd the smaller back,  
Or light from heavy with her breathing fan'd.  
When suddenly she saw the floor grow black,  
And troops of ants, flowing in noiseless train,  
Moved to the hill of seeds, as o'er a plain  
Armies approach a city for attack ;

### 5

And gathering on the grain, began to strive  
With grappling horns : and each from out the heap  
His burden drew, and all their motion live  
Struggled and slid upon the surface steep.  
And Psyche wonder'd, watching them, to find  
The creatures separated kind from kind :  
Till dizzied with the sight she fell asleep.

### 6

And when she woke 'twas with the morning sound  
Of Aphrodite's anger at the door,  
Whom high amaze stay'd backward, as she found  
Her foe asleep with all her trouble o'er :  
And round the room beheld, in order due,  
The piles arranged distinct and sorted true,  
Grain with grain, seed with seed, and spore with spore.

## December

7

She fiercely cried 'Thou shalt not thus escape;  
For to this marvel dar'st thou not pretend.  
There is but one that coud this order shape,  
Demeter,—but I knew her not thy friend.  
Therefore another trial will I set,  
In which she cannot aid thee nor abet,  
But thou thyself must bring it fair to end.'

8

Thereon she sped her to the bounds of Thrace,  
And set her by a river deep and wide,  
And said 'To east beyond this stream, a race  
Of golden-fleecèd sheep at pasture bide.  
Go seek them out; and this thy task, to pull  
But one lock for me of their precious wool,  
And give it in my hands at eventide:

9

'This do and thou shalt have thy heart's desire.'  
Which said, she fled and left her by the stream:  
And Psyche then, with courage still entire,  
Had plunged therein; but now of great esteem  
Her life she rated, while it lent a spell  
Wherein she yet might hope to quit her well,  
And in one winning all her woes redeem.

10

There as she stood in doubt, a fluting voice  
Rose from the flood, 'Psyche, be not afraid  
To hear a reed give tongue, for 'twas of choice  
That I from mortal flesh a plant was made.  
My name is Syrinx; once from mighty Pan  
Into the drowning river as I ran,  
A fearful prayer my steps for ever stay'd.

## *Eros & Psyche*

### 11

‘But by that change in many climes I live;  
And Pan, my lover, who to me alone  
Is true and does me honour, I forgive—  
Nor if I speak in sorrow is’t my own :  
Rather for thee my voice I now uplift  
To warn thee plunge not in the river swift,  
Nor seek the golden sheep to men unknown.

### 12

‘If thou should cross the stream, which may not be,  
Thou couldst not climb upon the hanging rocks,  
Nor ever, as the goddess bade thee, see  
The pasture of the yellow-fleeced flocks :  
Or if thou could, their herded horns would gore  
And slay thee on the crags, or thrust thee o’er  
Ere thou couldst rob them of their golden locks.

### 13

‘The goddess means thy death. But I can show  
How thy obedience yet may thwart her will.  
At noon the golden flocks descend below,  
Leaving the scented herbage of the hill,  
And where the shelving banks to shallows fall,  
Drink at the rippling water one and all,  
Nor back return till they have drawn their fill.

### 14

‘I will command a thornbush, that it stoop  
Over some ram that steppeth by in peace,  
And him in all its prickles firmly coop,  
Making thee seizure of his golden fleece ;  
So without peril of his angry horns  
Shalt thou be quit : for he upon the thorns  
Must leave his ransom ere he win release.’

## December

15

Then Psyche thank't her for her kind befriending,  
And hid among the rushes looking east ;  
And when noon came she saw the flock descending  
Out of the hills ; and lo ! one golden beast  
Caught in a thornbush ; and the mighty brute  
Struggl'd and tore it from its twisted root  
Into the stream, or e'er he was releas't.

16

And when they water'd were and gone, the breeze  
Floated the freighted thorn where Psyche lay :  
Whence she unhook'd the golden wool at ease,  
And back to heaven for passage swift gan pray.  
And Hermes, who was sent to be her guide  
Ifso she lived, came down at eventide,  
And bore her thither ere the close of day.

17

But when the goddess saw the locks of gold  
Held to her hands, her heart with wrath o'erran :  
'Most desperate thou, and by abetting bold,  
That dost outwit me, prove thee as I can.  
Yet this work is not thine : there is but one  
Of all the gods who coud the thing have done.  
Hast thou a friend too in the lusty Pan ?

18

'I'll give thee trial where he cannot aid.'  
Which said, she led her to a torrid land,  
Level and black, but not with flood or shade,  
For nothing coud the mighty heat withstand,  
Which aye from morn till eve the naked sun  
Pour'd on that plain, where never foot had run,  
Nor any herb sprung on its molten sand.

## *Eros & Psyche*

19

Far off a gloomy mountain rose alone :  
And Aphrodite, thither pointing, said  
'There lies thy task. Out of the topmost stone  
Of yonder hill upwells a fountain head.  
Take thou this goblet ; brimming must thou bring  
Its cup with water from that sacred spring,  
If ever to my son thou wouldst be wed.'

20

Saying, she gave into her hands a bowl  
Cut of one crystal, open, broad and fair ;  
And bade her at all hazard keep it whole,  
For heaven held nought beside so fine or rare.  
Then was she gone ; and Psyche on the plain  
Now doubted if she ever should regain  
The love of Eros, strove she howsoe'er.

21

Yet as a helmsman, at the word to tack,  
Swiftly without a thought puts down his helm,  
So Psyche turn'd to tread that desert black,  
Since was no fear that could her heart o'erwhelm ;  
Nor knew she that she went the fount to seek  
Of cold Cocytus, springing to the peak,  
Secretly from his source in Pluto's realm.

22

All night and day she journey'd, and at last  
Come to the rock gazed up in vain around :  
Nothing she saw but precipices vast  
O'er ruined scarps, with rugged ridges crown'd :  
And creeping to a cleft to rest in shade,  
Or e'er the desperate venture she assay'd,  
She fell asleep upon the stony ground.



## December

23

A dream came to her, thus : she stood alone  
Within her palace in the high ravine ;  
Where nought but she was changed, but she to stone.  
Worshippers throng'd the court, and still were seen  
Folk flying from the peak, who, ever more  
Flying and flying, lighted on the floor,  
*Hail !* cried they, *wife of Eros, adorèd queen !*

24

A hurtling of the battl'd air disturb'd  
Her sunken sense, and waked her eyes to meet  
The kingly bird of Zeus, himself that curb'd  
His swooping course, alighting at her feet ;  
With motion gentle, his far-darting eye  
In kindness dim'd upon her, he drew nigh,  
And thus in words unveil'd her foe's deceit :

25

' In vain, poor Psyche, hast thou hither striven  
Across the fiery plain toiling so well ;  
Cruelly to destruction art thou driven  
By her, whose hate thou canst not quit nor quell.  
No mortal foot may scale this horrid mount,  
And those black waters of its topmost fount  
Are guarded by the hornèd snakes of hell.

26

' Its little rill is an upleaping jet  
Of cold Cocytus, which for ever licks  
Earth's base, and when with Acheron 'tis met,  
Its waters with that other cannot mix,  
Which holds the elemental air dissolved ;  
But with it in its ceaseless course revolved  
Issues unmingl'd in the lake of Styx.

## *Eros & Psyche*

27

‘The souls of murderers, in guise of fish,  
Scream as they swim therein and wail for cold,  
Their times of woe determined by the wish  
Of them they murder’d on the earth of old :  
Whom each five years they see, whene’er they make  
Their passage to the Acherusian lake,  
And there release may win from pains condoled.

28

‘For if the pitying ear of them they slew  
Be haply piercèd by their voices spare,  
Then are they freed from pain ; as are some few ;  
But, for the most, again they forward fare  
To Tartarus obscene, and outcast thence  
Are hurried back into the cold intense,  
And with new company their torments share.

29

‘Its biting lymph may not be touch’d of man  
Or god, unless the Fates have so ordain’d ;  
Nor coud I in thy favour break the ban,  
Nor pass the dragons that thereby are chain’d,  
Didst thou not bear the sacred cup of Zeus ;  
Which, for thy peril lent, shall turn to use,  
And truly do the service which it feign’d.’

30

Thus as he spake, his talons made he ring  
Around the crystal bowl, and soaring high  
Descended as from heaven upon the spring :  
Nor dared the hornèd snakes of hell deny  
The minister of Zeus, that bore his cup,  
To fill it with their trusted water up,  
Thence to the King of heaven therewith to fly.

## *December*

31

But he to Psyche bent his gracious speed,  
And bidding her to mount his feather'd back  
Bore her aloft as once young Ganymede;  
Nor ever made his steady flight to slack,  
Ere that he set her down beside her goal,  
And gave into her hands the crystal bowl  
Unspill'd, o'erbrimming with the water black.

## JANUARY

1

BUT Eros now recover'd from his hurt,  
Felt other pangs; for who would not relent  
Weighing the small crime and unmatch'd desert  
Of Psyche with her cruel punishment?  
And shamed he grew to be so near allied  
To her, who by her taunts awoke his pride,  
As his compassion by her spite unspent.

2

Which Aphrodite seeing, wax'd more firm  
That he should never meet with Psyche more;  
And had in thought already set the term  
To their communion with that trial sore,  
Which sent her forth upon a quest accurst,  
And not to be accomplisht, that of thirst  
She there might perish on hell's torrid shore.

## *Eros & Psyche*

### 3

And now it chanced that she had called her son  
Into her presence-chamber, to unfold  
Psyche's destruction, that her fate might stun  
What love remained by duty uncontrol'd;  
And he to hide his tears' rebellious storm  
Was fled; when in his place another form  
Rose 'neath the golden lintel; and behold

### 4

Psyche herself, in slow and balanced strain,  
Poising the crystal bowl with fearful heed,  
Her eyes at watch upon the steadied plane,  
And whole soul gather'd in the single deed.  
Onward she came, and stooping to the floor  
Set down the cup unspill'd and brimming o'er  
At Aphrodite's feet, and rose up freed.

### 5

Surprise o'ercame the goddess, and she too  
Stood like a statue, but with passion pale:  
Till, when her victim nothing spake, she threw  
Some kindness in her voice, and bade her hail;  
But in the smiling judge 'twas plain to see—  
Saying 'What water bringst thou here to me?'—  
That justice over hate should not prevail.

### 6

Then Psyche said 'This is the biting flood  
Of black Cocytus, silver'd with the gleam  
Of souls, that guilty of another's blood  
Are pent therein, and as they swim they scream.  
The hornèd snakes of hell, upon the mount  
Enchain'd, for ever guard the livid fount:  
And but the Fates can grant to touch the stream.'

## January

7

'Wherefore,' the goddess cried, 'tis plain that none  
But one I wot of could this thing have wrought.  
That which another doth may well be done,  
Nor thou the nearer to my promise brought.  
Thou buildest on a hope to be destroy'd,  
If thou accept conditions, and avoid  
Thy parcel, nor thyself accomplish aught.

8

'Was it not kindness in me, being averse  
To all thy wish, to yield me thus to grant  
Thy heart's desire,—and nothing loathe I worse,—  
If thou wouldst only work as well as want?  
See, now I will not yet be all denial,  
But offer thee one last determining trial;  
And let it be a mutual covenant:

9

'This box,' and in her hands she took a pyx  
Square-cut, of dark obsidian's rarest green,  
'Take; and therewith beyond Tartarean Styx  
Go thou, and entering Hades' house obscene,  
Say to Persephonè, *If 'tis thy will*  
*To shew me so much favour, prithee fill*  
*This little vase with beauty for Love's queen.*

10

'*She begs but what shall well o'erlast a day;  
For of her own was much of late outspent  
In nursing of her son, in bed who lay  
Wounded by me, who for the gift am sent.*  
Then bring me what she gives, and with all speed;  
For truth to say I stand, thou seest, in need  
Of some such charm in my disparagement.

# *Eros & Psyche*

11

'If thou return to me with that acquist,  
Having thyself the journey made, I swear  
That day to give thee whatsoe'er thou list,  
An be it my son. Now, Psyche, wilt thou dare?'  
And Psyche said 'If this thou truly mean,  
I will go down to Tartarus obscene,  
And beg of Hades' queen thy beauty there.

12

'Show me the way.' But Aphrodite said,  
'That may'st thou find. Yet I will place thee whence  
A way there is : mortals have on it sped ;  
Ay, and return'd thereby : so let us hence.'  
Then swift to earth her willing prey she bore,  
And left her on the wide Laconian shore,  
Alone, at midnight, in the darkness dense.

13

'Twas winter ; and as shivering Psyche sat  
Waiting for morn, she question'd in her mind  
What place the goddess meant, arrived whereat  
She might descend to hell, or how should find  
The way which Gods to living men deny.  
'No Orpheus, nay, nor Hercules am I,'  
Said she, 'to loosen where the great Gods bind.'

14

And when at length the long-delaying dawn  
Broke on the peaks of huge Taygetus,  
And Psyche through the skirts of dark withdrawn  
Look'd on that promontory mountainous,  
And saw high-crested Taleton in snow,  
Her heart sank, and she wept with head bent low  
The malice of her foe dispiteous.

## January

15

And seeing near at hand an ancient tower,  
Deserted now, but once a hold of men,  
She came thereto, and, though 'twas all her power,  
Mounted its steep unbroken stair again.  
' Surely,' she said, for now a second time  
She thought to die—'this little height I climb  
Will prove my shortest road to Pluto's den.

16

'Hence must I come to Tartarus ; once there  
Turn as I may,' and straight to death had sprung ;  
When in the mossy tower the imprison'd air  
Was shaken, and the hoary stones gave tongue,  
'Stand firm ! Stand firm !' that rugged voice outcried ;  
'Of such as choose despondency for guide  
Hast thou not heard what bitterest fate is sung ?

17

'Hearken ; for I the road and means can teach  
How thou may'st come to hell and yet escape.  
And first must thou, that upper gate to reach,  
Along these seagirt hills thy journey shape,  
To where the land in sea dips furthest South  
At Tænarus and Hades' earthly mouth,  
Hard by Poseidon's temple at the cape.

18

'Thereby may one descend : but they that make  
That passage down must go provided well.  
So take in either hand a honey-cake  
Of pearlèd barley mix'd with hydromel ;  
And in thy mouth two doits, first having bound  
The pyx beneath thy robe enwrap'd around :  
Thus set thou forth ; and mark what more I tell.

## *Eros & Psyche*

19

'When thou hast gone alone some half thy road  
Thou wilt o'ertake a lame outwearied ass ;  
And one that beats him, tottering 'neath his load  
Of loosely bundl'd wood, will cry *Alas* ;  
*Help me, kind friend, my faggots to adjust !*  
But thou that silly cripple's words mistrust ;  
'Tis planted for thy death. Note it and pass.

20

'And when thy road the Stygian river joins,  
Where woolly Charon ferries o'er the dead,  
He will demand his fare : one of thy coins  
Force with thy tongue between thy teeth, thy head  
Offering instead of hand to give the doit.  
His fingers in this custom are adroit,  
And thine must not set down the barleybread.

21

Then in his crazy bark as, ferrying o'er  
The stream, thou sittest, one that seems to float  
Rather than swim, midway 'twixt shore and shore,  
Will stretch his fleshless hand upon the boat,  
And beg thee of thy pity take him in.  
Shut thy soft ear unto his clamour thin,  
Nor for a phantom deed thyself devote.

22

'Next, on the further bank when thou art stept,  
Three wizen'd women weaving at the woof  
Will stop, and pray thee in their art adept  
To free their tangl'd threads. Hold thou aloof ;  
For this and other traps thy foe hath plan'd  
To make thee drop the cakes out of thy hand,  
Putting thy prudence to perpetual proof.



## January

23

'For by one cake thou comest into Hell,  
And by one cake departest ; since the hound  
That guards the gate is ever pleasèd well  
To taste man's meal, or sweeten'd grain unground.  
Cast him a cake ; for that thou may'st go free  
Even to the mansion of Persephonè,  
Withouten stay or peril, safe and sound.

24

'She will receive thee kindly ; thou decline  
Her courtesies, and make the floor thy seat ;  
Refusing what is offer'd, food or wine ;  
Save only beg a crust of bread to eat.  
Then tell thy mission, and her present take ;  
Which when thou hast, set forth with pyx and cake,  
One in each hand, while yet thou may'st retreat.

25

'Giving thy second cake to Cerberus,  
The coin to Charon, and that way whereby  
Thou camest following, thou comest thus  
To see again the starry choir on high.  
But guard thou well the pyx, nor once uplift  
The lid to look on Persephassa's gift ;  
Else 'tis in vain I bid thee now not die.'

26

Then Psyche thank'd the tower, and stoopt her  
mouth  
To kiss the stones upon his rampart hoary ;  
And coming down his stair went hasting south,  
Along the steep Tænarian promontory ;  
And found the cave and temple by the cape,  
And took the cakes and coins, and made escape  
Beneath the earth, according to his story.

## *Eros & Psyche*

27

And overtook the ass, but lent no aid ;  
And offer'd Charon with her teeth his fee ;  
And pass'd the floating ghost, in vain who pray'd ;  
And turned her back upon the weavers three ;  
And threw the honey-cake to that hell-hound  
Three-headed Cerberus ; and safe and sound,  
Came to the mansion of Persephonè.

28

Kindly received, she courtesy declined :  
Sat on the ground ; ate not, save where she lay,  
A crust of bread ; reveal'd the goddess' mind ;  
The gift took ; and return'd upon her way :  
Gave Cerberus his cake, Charon his fare,  
And saw through Hell's mouth to the purple air  
And one by one the keen stars melt in day.

29

Awhile from so long journeying in the shades .  
Resting at Tænarus she came to know  
How, up the eastern coast some forty stades,  
There stood a temple of her goddess foe.  
There would she make her offering, there reclaim  
The prize, which now 'twas happiness to name,  
The joy that should redeem all passèd woe.

30

And wending by the sunny shore at noon,  
She with her pyx, and wondering what it hid,  
Of what kind, what the fashion of the boon  
Coud be, that she to look on was forbid,—  
Alas for Innocence so hard to teach !—  
At fancy's prick she sat her on the beach,  
And to content desire lifted the lid.

# January

31

She saw within nothing : But o'er her sight  
That looked on nothing gan a darkness creep.  
A cloudy poison, mix'd of Stygian night,  
Rapt her to deadly and infernal sleep.  
Backward she fell, like one when all is o'er,  
And lay outstretch'd, as lies upon the shore  
A drown'd corpse cast up by the murmuring deep.

## FEBRUARY

I

WHILE Eros in his chamber hid his tears,  
Mourning the loss of Psyche and her fate,  
The rumour of her safety reacht his ears  
And how she came to Aphrodite's gate :  
Whereat with hope return'd his hardihood,  
And secretly he purposed while he could  
Himself to save her from the goddess' hate.

2

Then learning what he might and guessing more,  
His ready wit came soon to understand  
The journey to the far Laconian shore ;  
Whither to fly and seek his love he plan'd :  
And making good escape in dark of night,  
Ere the sun crost his true meridian flight  
He by Teuthronè struck the southern strand.

## *Eros & Psyche*

### 3

There as it chanc't he found that snowy bird  
Of Crete, that late made mischief with his queen,  
And now along the cliffs with wings unstir'd  
Sail'd, and that morn had cross'd the sea between :  
Whom as he past he hail'd, and question'd thus,  
' O snowy gull, if thou from Tænarus  
Be come, say, hast thou there my Psyche seen ?'

### 4

The gull replied ' Thy Psyche have I seen ;  
Walking beside the sea she joy'th to bear  
A pyx of dark obsidian's rarest green,  
Wherein she gazeth on her features fair.  
She is not hence by now six miles at most.'  
Then Eros bade him speed, and down the coast  
Held on his passage through the buoyant air.

### 5

With eager eye he search'd the salty marge,  
Boding all mischief from his mother's glee ;  
And wondering of her wiles, and what the charge  
Shut in the dark obsidian pyx might be.  
And lo ! at last, outstretch'd beside the rocks,  
Psyche as lifeless ; and the open box  
Laid with the weedy refuse of the sea.

### 6

He guess'd all, flew down, and beside her knelt,  
With both his hands stroking her temples wan ;  
And for the poison with his fingers felt,  
And drew it gently from her ; and anon  
She slowly from those Stygian fumes was freed ;  
Which he with magic handling and good heed  
Replaced in pyx, and shut the lid thereon.

## February

### 7

'O Psyche,' thus, and kissing her he cried,  
'O simple-hearted Psyche, once again  
Hast thou thy foolish longing gratified,  
A second time hath prying been thy banc.  
But lo ! I, love, am come, for I am thine :  
Nor ever more shall any fate malign,  
Or spite of goddess smite our love in twain.

### 8

'Let now that I have saved thee twice outweigh  
The once that I deserted thee : and thou  
Hast much obey'd for once to disobey,  
And wilt no more my bidding disallow.  
Take up thy pyx ; to Aphrodite go,  
And claim the promise of thy mighty foe ;  
Maybe that she will grant it to thee now.

### 9

'If she should yet refuse, despair not yet !'  
Then Psyche, when she felt his arms restore  
Their old embrace, and as their bodies met,  
Knew the great joy that grief is pardon'd for ;  
And how it doth first ecstasy excel,  
When love well-known, long-lost, and mournèd well  
In long days of no hope, comes home once more.

### 10

But Eros leaping up with purpose keen  
Into the air, as only love can fly,  
Bore her to heaven, and setting her unseen  
At Aphrodite's golden gate,—whereby  
They came as night was close on twilight dim,—  
There left, and bidding her say nought of him  
Went onward to the house of Zeus most high.

## *Eros & Psyche*

11

Where winning audience of the heavenly sire,  
Who well disposed to him was used to be,  
He told the story of his strong desire ;  
And boldly begg'd that Zeus would grant his plea  
That he might have sweet Psyche for his wife,  
And she be dower'd with immortal life,  
Since she was worthy, by his firm decree.

12

And great Zeus smiled ; and at the smile of Zeus  
All heaven was glad, and on the earth below  
Was calm and peace awhile and sorrow's truce :  
The sun shone forth and smote the winter snow,  
The flow'ers sprang, the birds gan sing and pair,  
And mortals, as they drew the brighten'd air,  
Marvel'd, and quite forgot their common woe.

13

Yet gave the Thunderer not his full consent  
Without some words : ' At length is come the day,'  
Thus spake he, ' when for all thy youth misspent,  
Thy mischief-making and thy wanton play  
Thou art upgrown to taste the sweet and sour :  
Good shall it work upon thee : from this hour  
Look we for better things. And this I say,

14

' That since thy birth, which all we took for bliss,  
Thou hast but mock'd us ; and no less on me  
Hast brought disfavour and contempt, ywiss,  
Than others that have had to do with thee :  
Till only such as vow'd themselves aloof  
From thee and thine were held in good approval ;  
And few there were, who thus of shame went free.

## February

15

'That punishment is shapen as reward  
Is like thy fortune : but our good estate  
We honour, while we sit to be adored :  
And thus 'twas written in the book of Fate.  
Not for thy pleasure, but the general weal  
Grant I the grace for which thou here dost kneel ;  
And that which I determine shall not wait.'

16

So wingèd Hermes through the heaven he sped,  
To warn the high celestials to his hall,  
Where they should Psyche see with Eros wed,  
And keep the day with feast ambrosial.  
And Hermes, flying through the skiey ways  
Of high Olympus, spread sweet Psyche's praise,  
And bade the mighty gods obey his call

17

Then all the Kronian gods and goddesses  
Assembl'd at his cry,—and now 'twas known  
Why Zeus had smiled,—the lesser majesties  
Attending them before his royal throne.  
Athena, mistress good of them that know,  
Came, and Apollo, warder off of woe,  
Who had to Psyche's sire her fate foreshown ;

18

Demeter, giver of the golden corn,  
Fair Hebe, honour'd at her Attic shrine,  
And Artemis with hunting spear and horn,  
And Dionysos, planter of the vine,  
With old Poseidon from the barren sea,  
And Leto, and the lame Hephæstos, he  
Himself who built those halls with skill divine.

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## *Eros & Psyche*

19

And ruddy Pan with many a quip and quirk  
Air'd 'mong those lofty gods his mirth illbred,  
Bearing a mighty bowl of cretan work :  
Stern Arês, with his crisp hair helmeted,  
Came, and retirèd Hestia, and the god  
Hermes, with wingèd cap and ribbon'd rod,  
By whom the company was heralded.

20

And Hera sat by Zeus, and all around  
The Muses, that of learning make their choice ;  
Who, when Apollo struck his strings to sound,  
Sang in alternate music with sweet voice :  
And righteous Themis, and the Graces three  
Ushering the anger'd Aphrodite ; she  
Alone of all were there might not rejoice

21

But ere they sat to feast, Zeus bade them fill  
The cup ambrosial of immortal life,  
And said ' If Psyche drink,—and 'tis my will,—  
There is an end of this unhappy strife.  
Nor can the goddess, whose mislike had birth  
From too great honour paid the bride on earth,  
Forbid her any more for Eros' wife.'

22

Then Aphrodite said ' So let it be.'  
And Psyche was brought in, with such a flush  
Of joy upon her face, as there to see  
Was fairer to love's eye than beauty's blush.  
And then she drank the eternal wine, whose draught  
Can Terror cease : which flesh hath never quafft,  
Nor doth it flow from grape that mortals crush.



## February

23

And next stood Eros forth, and took her hand,  
And kisst her happy face before them all :  
And Zeus proclaim'd them married, and outban'd  
From heaven whoever should that word miscall.  
And then all sat to feast, and one by one  
Pledged Psyche ere they drank and cried *Well done !*  
And merry laughter rang throughout the hall.

24

So thus was Eros unto Psyche wed,  
The heavenly bridegroom to his earthly bride,  
Who won his love, in simple maidenhead :  
And by her love herself she glorified,  
And him from wanton wildness disinclined ;  
Since in his love for her he came to find  
A joy unknown through all Olympus wide.

25

And Psyche for her fall was quite forgiven,  
Since 'gainst herself when tempted to rebel,  
By others' malice on her ruin driven,  
Only of sweet simplicity she fell :—  
Wherein who fall may fall unto the skies ;—  
And being foolish she was yet most wise,  
And took her trials patiently and well.

26

And Aphrodite since her full defeat  
Is kinder and less jealous than before,  
And smiling on them both, calls Psyche sweet ;  
But thinks her son less manly than of yore :  
Though still she holds his arm of some renown,  
When he goes smiting mortals up and down,  
Piercing their marrow with his weapons sore.

# *Eros & Psyche*

27

*So now in steadfast love and happy state*  
They hold for aye their mansion in the sky,  
And send down heavenly peace on those who mate,  
In virgin love, to find their joy thereby :  
Whom gently Eros shooteth, and apart  
Keepeth for them from all his sheaf that dart  
Which Psyche in his chamber pickt to try.

28

Now in that same month Psyche bare a child,  
Who straight in heaven was namèd Hedonè  
In mortal tongues by other letters styled ;  
Whom all to love, however named, agree :  
Whom in our noble English JOY we call,  
And honour them among us most of all,  
Whose happy children are as fair as she.

29

## *ENVOY*

IT IS MY PRAYER THAT SHE MAY SMILE ON ALL  
WHO READ MY TALE AS SHE HATH SMILED ON ME.

# THE GROWTH OF LOVE



### PREVIOUS EDITIONS

1. *XXIV* Sonnets. Ed. Bumpus, 1876.
2. *LXXIX* Sonnets. Daniel Press, 1889.  
*This edition was copied in America.*
3. *Do. do.* Black letter. 1890.
4. *LXIX* Sonnets. Smith, Elder & Co. Vol. I, 1898.

# THE GROWTH OF LOVE

## I

THEY that in play can do the thing they would,  
Having an instinct throned in reason's place,  
—And every perfect action hath the grace  
Of indolence or thoughtless hardihood—  
These are the best : yet be there workmen good  
Who lose in earnestness control of face,  
Or reckon means, and rapt in effort base  
Reach to their end by steps well understood.

Me whom thou sawest of late strive with the pains  
Of one who spends his strength to rule his nerve,  
—Even as a painter breathlessly who strains  
His scarcely moving hand lest it should swerve—  
Behold me, now that I have cast my chains,  
Master of the art which for thy sake I serve.

# *The Growth of Love*

## 2

FOR thou art mine : and now I am ashamed  
To have used means to win so pure acquist,  
And of my trembling fear that might have misst  
Thro' very care the gold at which I aim'd ;  
And am as happy but to hear thee named,  
As are those gentle souls by angels kisst  
In pictures seen leaving their marble cist  
To go before the throne of grace unblamed.

Nor surer am I water hath the skill  
To quench my thirst, or that my strength is freed  
In delicate ordination as I will,  
Than that to be myself is all I need  
For thee to be most mine : so I stand still,  
And save to taste my joy no more take heed.

## 3

THE whole world now is but the minister  
Of thee to me : I see no other scheme  
But universal love, from timeless dream  
Waking to thee his joy's interpreter.  
I walk around and in the fields confer  
Of love at large with tree and flower and stream,  
And list the lark descant upon my theme,  
Heaven's musical accepted worshipper.

Thy smile outfaceth ill : and that old feud  
"Twixt things and me is quash'd in our new truce ;  
And nature now dearly with thee endued  
No more in shame ponders her old excuse,  
But quite forgets her frowns and antics rude,  
So kindly hath she grown to her new use.

# *The Growth of Love*

## 4

THE very names of things belov'd are dear,  
And sounds will gather beauty from their sense,  
As many a face thro' love's long residence  
Groweth to fair instead of plain and sere :  
But when I say thy name it hath no peer,  
And I suppose fortune determined thence  
Her dower, that such beauty's excellence  
Should have a perfect title for the ear.

Thus may I think the adopting Muses chose  
Their sons by name, knowing none would be heard  
Or writ so oft in all the world as those,—  
Dan Chaucer, mighty Shakespeare, then for third  
The classic Milton, and to us arose  
Shelley with liquid music in the word.

## 5

THE poets were good teachers, for they taught  
Earth had this joy ; but that 'twould ever be  
That fortune should be perfected in me,  
My heart of hope dared not engage the thought.  
So I stood low, and now but to be caught  
By any self-styled lords of the age with thee  
Vexes my modesty, lest they should see  
I hold them owls and peacocks, things of nought.

And when we sit alone, and as I please  
I taste thy love's full smile, and can enstate  
The pleasure of my kingly heart at ease,  
My thought swims like a ship, that with the weight  
Of her rich burden sleeps on the infinite seas  
Becalm'd, and cannot stir her golden freight.

# *The Growth of Love*

## 6

WHILE yet we wait for spring, and from the dry  
And blackening east that so embitters March,  
Well-housed must watch grey fields and meadows parch,  
And driven dust and withering snowflake fly ;  
Already in glimpses of the tarnish'd sky  
The sun is warm and beckons to the larch,  
And where the covert hazels interarch  
Their tassell'd twigs, fair beds of primrose lie.

Beneath the crisp and wintry carpet hid  
A million buds but stay their blossoming ;  
And trustful birds have built their nests amid  
The shuddering boughs, and only wait to sing  
Till one soft shower from the south shall bid,  
And hither tempt the pilgrim steps of spring.

## 7

IN thee my spring of life hath bid the while  
A rose unfold beyond the summer's best,  
The mystery of joy made manifest  
In love's self-answering and awakening smile ;  
Whereby the lips in wonder reconcile  
Passion with peace, and show desire at rest,—  
A grace of silence by the Greek unguessed,  
That bloom'd to immortalize the Tuscan style :

When first the angel-song that faith hath ken'd  
Fancy pourtray'd, above recorded oath  
Of Israel's God, or light of poem pen'd ;  
The very countenance of plighted troth  
'Twixt heaven and earth, where in one moment blend  
The hope of one and happiness of both.



# *The Growth of Love*

## 8

FOR beauty being the best of all we know  
Sums up the unsearchable and secret aims  
Of nature, and on joys whose earthly names  
Were never told can form and sense bestow ;  
And man hath sped his instinct to outgo  
The step of science ; and against her shames  
Imagination stakes out heavenly claims,  
Building a tower above the head of woe.

Nor is there fairer work for beauty found  
Than that she win in nature her release  
From all the woes that in the world abound :  
Nay with his sorrow may his love increase,  
If from man's greater need beauty redound,  
And claim his tears for homage of his peace.

## 9

THUS to thy beauty doth my fond heart look,  
That late dismay'd her faithless faith forbore ;  
And wins again her love lost in the lore  
Of schools and script of many a learned book :  
For thou what ruthless death untimely took  
Shalt now in better brotherhood restore,  
And save my batter'd ship that far from shore  
High on the dismal deep in tempest shook.

So in despite of sorrow lately learn'd  
I still hold true to truth since thou art true,  
Nor wail the woe which thou to joy hast turn'd :  
Nor come the heavenly sun and bathing blue  
To my life's need more splendid and unearn'd  
Than hath thy gift outmatch'd desire and due.

# *The Growth of Love*

## IO

WINTER was not unkind because uncouth ;  
His prison'd time made me a closer guest,  
And gave thy graciousness a warmer zest,  
Biting all else with keen and angry tooth :  
And bravelier the triumphant blood of youth  
Mantling thy cheek its happy home possess,  
And sterner sport by day put strength to test,  
And custom's feast at night gave tongue to truth.

Or say hath flaunting summer a device  
To match our midnight revelry, that rang  
With steel and flame along the snow-girt ice ?  
Or when we hark't to nightingales that sang  
On dewy eves in spring, did they entice  
To gentler love than winter's icy fang ?

## II

THERE'S many a would-be poet at this hour,  
Rhymes of a love that he hath never woo'd,  
And o'er his lamplit desk in solitude  
Deems that he sitteth in the Muses' bower :  
And some the flames of earthly love devour,  
Who have taken no kiss of Nature, nor renew'd  
In the world's wilderness with heavenly food  
The sickly body of their perishing power.

So none of all our company, I boast,  
But now would mock my penning, could they see  
How down the right it maps a jagged coast ;  
Seeing they hold the manlier praise to be  
Strong hand and will, and the heart best when most  
'Tis sober, simple, true, and fancy-free.

# *The Growth of Love*

12

How could I quarrel or blame you, most dear,  
Who all thy virtues gavest and kept back none ;  
Kindness and gentleness, truth without peer,  
And beauty that my fancy fed upon ?

Now not my life's contrition for my fault  
Can blot that day, nor work me recompence,  
Tho' I might worthily thy worth exalt,  
Making thee long amends for short offence.

For surely nowhere, love, if not in thee  
Are grace and truth and beauty to be found ;  
And all my praise of these can only be  
A praise of thee, howe'er by thee disown'd :

While still thou must be mine tho' far removed,  
And I for one offence no more beloved.

13

Now since to me altho' by thee refused  
The world is left, I shall find pleasure still ;  
The art that most I have loved but little used  
Will yield a world of fancies at my will :

And tho' where'er thou goest it is from me,  
I where I go thee in my heart must bear ;  
And what thou wert that wilt thou ever be,  
My choice, my best, my loved, and only fair.

Farewell, yet think not such farewell a change  
From tenderness, tho' once to meet or part  
But on short absence so could sense derange  
That tears have graced the greeting of my heart ;

They were proud drops and had my leave to fall,  
Not on thy pity for my pain to call.

# *The Growth of Love*

## 14

WHEN sometimes in an ancient house where state  
From noble ancestry is handed on,  
We see but desolation thro' the gate,  
And richest heirlooms all to ruin gone ;  
    Because maybe some fancied shame or fear,  
Bred of disease or melancholy fate,  
Hath driven the owner from his rightful sphere  
To wander nameless save to pity or hate :

What is the wreck of all he hath in fief,  
When he that hath is wrecking ? nought is fine  
Unto the sick, nor doth it burden grief  
That the house perish when the soul doth pine.

Thus I my state despise, slain by a sting  
So slight 'twould not have hurt a meaner thing.

## 15

WHO builds a ship must first lay down the keel  
Of health, whereto the ribs of mirth are wed :  
And knit, with beams and knees of strength, a bed  
For decks of purity, her floor and ceil.  
Upon her masts, Adventure, Pride, and Zeal,  
To fortune's wind the sails of purpose spread :  
And at the prow make figured maidenhead  
O'eride the seas and answer to the wheel.

And let him deep in memory's hold have stor'd  
Water of Helicon : and let him fit  
The needle that doth true with heaven accord :  
Then bid her crew, love, diligence and wit  
With justice, courage, temperance come aboard,  
And at her helm the master reason sit.

# *The Growth of Love*

16

THIS world is unto God a work of art,  
Of which the unaccomplish'd heavenly plan  
Is hid in life within the creature's heart,  
And for perfection looketh unto man.

Ah me ! those thousand ages : with what slow  
Pains and persistence were his idols made,  
Destroy'd and made, ere ever he could know  
The mighty mother must be so obey'd.

For lack of knowledge and thro' little skill  
His childish mimicry outwent his aim ;  
His effort shaped the genius of his will ;  
Till thro' distinction and revolt he came,  
True to his simple terms of good and ill,  
Seeking the face of Beauty without blame.

17

SAY who be these light-bearded, sunburnt faces  
In negligent and travel-stain'd array,  
That in the city of Dante come to-day,  
Haughtily visiting her holy places ?  
O these be noble men that hide their graces,  
True England's blood, her ancient glory's stay,  
By tales of fame diverted on their way  
Home from the rule of oriental races.

Life-trifling lions these, of gentle eyes  
And motion delicate, but swift to fire  
For honour, passionate where duty lies,  
Most loved and loving : and they quickly tire  
Of Florence, that she one day more denies  
The embrace of wife and son, of sister or sire.

# *The Growth of Love*

18

WHERE San Miniato's convent from the sun  
At forenoon overlooks the city of flowers  
I sat, and gazing on her domes and towers  
Call'd up her famous children one by one :  
And three who all the rest had far outdone,  
Mild Giotto first, who stole the morning hours,  
I saw, and god-like Buonarroti's powers,  
And Dante, gravest poet, her much-wrong'd son.

Is all this glory, I said, another's praise ?  
Are these heroic triumphs things of old,  
And do I dead upon the living gaze ?  
Or rather doth the mind, that can behold  
The wondrous beauty of the works and days,  
Create the image that her thoughts enfold ?

19

REJOICE, ye dead, where'er your spirits dwell,  
Rejoice that yet on earth your fame is bright ;  
And that your names, remember'd day and night,  
Live on the lips of those that love you well.  
'Tis ye that conquer'd have the powers of hell,  
Each with the special grace of your delight :  
Ye are the world's creators, and thro' might  
Of everlasting love ye did excel.

Now ye are starry names, above the storm  
And war of Time and nature's endless wrong  
Ye flit, in pictured truth and peaceful form,  
Wing'd with bright music and melodious song,—  
The flaming flowers of heaven, making May-dance  
In dear Imagination's rich pleasance.

# *The Growth of Love*

20

THE world still goeth about to shew and hide,  
Befool'd of all opinion, fond of fame :  
But he that can do well taketh no pride,  
And see'th his error, undisturb'd by shame :  
    So poor's the best that longest life can do,  
The most so little, diligently done ;  
So mighty is the beauty that doth woo,  
So vast the joy that love from love hath won.

God's love to win is easy, for He loveth  
Desire's fair attitude, nor strictly weighs  
The broken thing, but all alike approveth  
Which love hath aim'd at Him : that is heaven's praise :  
    And if we look for any praise on earth,  
'Tis in man's love : all else is nothing worth.

21

O FLESH and blood, comrade to tragic pain  
And clownish merriment ; whose sense could wake  
Sermons in stones, and count death but an ache,  
All things as vanity, yet nothing vain :  
The world, set in thy heart, thy passionate strain  
Reveal'd anew ; but thou for man didst make  
Nature twice natural, only to shake  
Her kingdom with the creatures of thy brain.

Lo, Shakespeare, since thy time nature is loth  
To yield to art her fair supremacy ;  
In conquering one thou hast so enrichèd both.  
What shall I say ? for God—whose wise decree  
Confirmeth all He did by all He doth—  
Doubled His whole creation making thee.

# *The Growth of Love*

22

I WOULD be a bird, and straight on wings I arise,  
And carry purpose up to the ends of the air :  
In calm and storm my sails I feather, and where  
By freezing cliffs the unransom'd wreckage lies :  
Or, strutting on hot meridian banks, surprise  
The silence : over plains in the moonlight bare  
I chase my shadow, and perch where no bird dare  
In treetops torn by fiercest winds of the skies.

Poor simple birds, foolish birds ! then I cry,  
Ye pretty pictures of delight, unstir'd  
By the only joy of knowing that ye fly ;  
Ye are not what ye are, but rather, sum'd in a word,  
The alphabet of a god's idea, and I  
Who master it, I am the only bird.

23

O WEARY pilgrims, chanting of your woe,  
That turn your eyes to all the peaks that shine,  
Hailing in each the citadel divine  
The which ye thought to have enter'd long ago ;  
Until at length your feeble steps and slow  
Falter upon the threshold of the shrine,  
And your hearts overburden'd doubt in fine  
Whether it be Jerusalem or no :

Dishearten'd pilgrims, I am one of you ;  
For, having worshipp'd many a barren face,  
I scarce now greet the goal I journey'd to :  
I stand a pagan in the holy place ;  
Beneath the lamp of truth I am found untrue,  
And question with the God that I embrace.



# *The Growth of Love*

24

SPRING hath her own bright days of calm and peace ;  
Her melting air, at every breath we draw,  
Floods heart with love to praise God's gracious law :  
But suddenly—so short is pleasure's lease—  
The cold returns, the buds from growing cease,  
And nature's conquer'd face is full of awe ;  
As now the trait'rous north with icy flaw  
Freezes the dew upon the sick lamb's fleece,

And 'neath the mock sun searching everywhere  
Rattles the crispèd leaves with shivering din :  
So that the birds are silent with despair  
Within the thickets ; nor their armour thin  
Will gaudy flies adventure in the air,  
Nor any lizard sun his spotted skin.

25

NOTHING is joy without thee : I can find  
No rapture in the first relays of spring,  
In songs of birds, in young buds opening,  
Nothing inspiring and nothing kind ;  
For lack of thee, who once wert throned behind  
All beauty, like a strength where graces cling,—  
The jewel and heart of light, which everything  
Wrestled in rivalry to hold enshrined.

Ah ! since thou'rt fled, and I in each fair sight  
The sweet occasion of my joy deplore,  
Where shall I seek thee best, or whom invite  
Within thy sacred temples and adore ?  
Who shall fill thought and truth with old delight,  
And lead my soul in life as heretofore ?

# *The Growth of Love*

26

THE work is done, and from the fingers fall  
The bloodwarm tools that brought the labour thro':  
The tasking eye that overrunneth all  
Rests, and affirms there is no more to do.

Now the third joy of making, the sweet flower  
Of blessed work, bloometh in godlike spirit ;  
Which whoso plucketh holdeth for an hour  
The shrivelling vanity of mortal merit.

And thou, my perfect work, thou'rt of to-day ;  
To-morrow a poor and alien thing wilt be,  
True only should the swift life stand at stay :  
Therefore farewell, nor look to bide with me.

Go find thy friends, if there be one to love thee :  
Casting thee forth, my child, I rise above thee.

27

THE fabled sea-snake, old Leviathan,  
Or else what grisly beast of scaly chine  
That champ'd the ocean-wrack and swash'd the brine,  
Before the new and milder days of man,  
Had never rib nor bray nor swindging fan  
Like his iron swimmer of the Clyde or Tyne,  
Late-born of golden seed to breed a line  
Of offspring swifter and more huge of plan.

Straight is her going, for upon the sun  
When once she hath look'd, her path and place are plain ;  
With tireless speed she smiteth one by one  
The shuddering seas and foams along the main ;  
And her eased breath, when her wild race is run,  
Roars thro' her nostrils like a hurricane.

# *The Growth of Love*

28

A THOUSAND times hath in my heart's behoof  
My tongue been set his passion to impart ;  
A thousand times hath my too coward heart  
My mouth reclosed and fix'd it to the roof ;  
Then with such cunning hath it held aloof,  
A thousand times kept silence with such art  
That words could do no more : yet on thy part  
Hath silence given a thousand times reproof.

I should be bolder, seeing I commend  
Love, that my dilatory purpose primes,  
But fear lest with my fears my hope should end :  
Nay, I would truth deny and burn my rhymes,  
Renew my sorrows rather than offend,  
A thousand times, and yet a thousand times.

29

I TRAVEL to thee with the sun's first rays,  
That lift the dark west and unwrap the night ;  
I dwell beside thee when he walks the height,  
And fondly toward thee at his setting gaze.  
I wait upon thy coming, but always—  
Dancing to meet my thoughts if they invite—  
Thou hast outrun their longing with delight,  
And in my solitude dost mock my praise.

Now doth my drop of time transcend the whole :  
I see no fame in Khufu's pyramid,  
No history where loveless Nile doth roll.  
—This is eternal life, which doth forbid  
Mortal detraction to the exalted soul,  
And from her inward eye all fate hath hid.

# *The Growth of Love*

30

My lady pleases me and I please her ;  
This know we both, and I besides know well  
Wherefore I love her, and I love to tell  
My love, as all my loving songs aver.  
But what on her part could the passion stir,  
Tho' 'tis more difficult for love to spell,  
Yet can I dare divine how this befel,  
Nor will her lips deny it if I err.

She loves me first because I love her, then  
Loves me for knowing why she should be loved,  
And that I love to praise her, loves again.  
So from her beauty both our loves are moved,  
And by her beauty are sustain'd ; nor when  
The earth falls from the sun is this disproved.

31

IN all things beautiful, I cannot see  
Her sit or stand, but love is stir'd anew :  
'Tis joy to watch the folds fall as they do,  
And all that comes is past expectancy.  
If she be silent, silence let it be ;  
He who would bid her speak might sit and sue  
The deep-brow'd Phidian Jove to be untrue  
To his two thousand years' solemnity.

Ah, but her launchèd passion, when she sings,  
Wins on the hearing like a shapen prow  
Borne by the mastery of its urgent wings :  
Or if she deign her wisdom, she doth show  
She hath the intelligence of heavenly things,  
Unsullied by man's mortal overthrow.

## *The Growth of Love*

32

THUS to be humbled : 'tis that ranging pride  
No refuge hath ; that in his castle strong  
Brave reason sits beleaguer'd, who so long  
Kept field, but now must starve where he doth hide ;  
That industry, who once the foe defied,  
Lies slaughter'd in the trenches ; that the throng  
Of idle fancies pipe their foolish song,  
Where late the puissant captains fought and died.

Thus to be humbled : 'tis to be undone ;  
A forest fell'd ; a city razed to ground ;  
A cloak unsewn, unwoven and unspun  
Till not a thread remains that can be wound.  
And yet, O lover, thee, the ruin'd one,  
Love who hath humbled thus hath also crown'd.

33

I CARE not if I live, tho' life and breath  
Have never been to me so dear and sweet.  
I care not if I die, for I could meet—  
Being so happy—happily my death.  
I care not if I love ; to-day she saith  
She loveth, and love's history is complete.  
Nor care I if she love me ; at her feet  
My spirit bows entranced and worshipping.

I have no care for what was most my care,  
But all around me see fresh beauty born,  
And common sights grown lovelier than they were :  
I dream of love, and in the light of morn  
Tremble, beholding all things very fair  
And strong with strength that puts my strength to scorn.

# *The Growth of Love*

## 34

*O my goddess divine* sometimes I say :—  
Now let this word for ever and all suffice ;  
Thou art insatiable, and yet not twice  
Can even thy lover give his soul away :  
And for my acts, that at thy feet I lay ;  
For never any other, by device  
Of wisdom, love or beauty, could entice  
My homage to the measure of this day.

I have no more to give thee : lo, I have sold  
My life, have emptied out my heart, and spent  
Whate'er I had ; till like a beggar, bold  
With nought to lose, I laugh and am content.  
A beggar kisses thee ; nay, love, behold,  
I fear not : thou too art in beggarment.

## 35

ALL earthly beauty hath one cause and proof,  
To lead the pilgrim soul to beauty above :  
Yet lieth the greater bliss so far aloof,  
That few there be are wean'd from earthly love.

Joy's ladder it is, reaching from home to home,  
The best of all the work that all was good ;  
Whereof 'twas writ the angels aye upclomb,  
Down sped, and at the top the Lord God stood.

But I my time abuse, my eyes by day  
Center'd on thee, by night my heart on fire—  
Letting my number'd moments run away—  
Nor e'en 'twixt night and day to heaven aspire :

So true it is that what the eye seeth not  
But slow is loved, and loved is soon forgot.

# *The Growth of Love*

36

O my life's mischief, once my love's delight,  
That drew'st a mortgage on my heart's estate,  
Whose baneful clause is never out of date,  
Nor can avenging time restore my right :  
Whom first to lose sounded that note of spite,  
Whereto my doleful days were tuned by fate :  
That art the well-loved cause of all my hate,  
The sun whose wandering makes my hopeless night :

Thou being in all my lacking all I lack,  
It is thy goodness turns my grace to crime,  
Thy fleetness from my goal which holds me back ;  
Wherefore my feet go out of step with time,  
My very grasp of life is old and slack,  
And even my passion falters in my rhyme.

37

At times with hurried hoofs and scattering dust  
I race by field or highway, and my horse  
Spare not, but urge direct in headlong course  
Unto some fair far hill that gain I must :  
But near arrived the vision soon mistrust,  
Rein in, and stand as one who sees the source  
Of strong illusion, shaming thought to force  
From off his mind the soil of passion's gust.

My brow I bare then, and with slacken'd speed  
Can view the country pleasant on all sides,  
And to kind salutation give good heed :  
I ride as one who for his pleasure rides,  
And stroke the neck of my delighted steed,  
And seek what cheer the village inn provides.

# *The Growth of Love*

38

AN idle June day on the sunny Thames,  
Floating or rowing as our fancy led,  
Now in the high beams basking as we sped,  
Now in green shade gliding by mirror'd stems ;  
    By lock and weir and isle, and many a spot  
Of memoried pleasure, glad with strength and skill,  
Friendship, good wine, and mirth, that serve not ill  
The heavenly Muse, tho' she requite them not :

I would have life—thou saidst—all as this day,  
Simple enjoyment calm in its excess,  
With not a grief to cloud, and not a ray  
Of passion overhot my peace to oppress ;  
With no ambition to reproach delay,  
Nor rapture to disturb its happiness.

39

A MAN that sees by chance his picture, made  
As once a child he was, handling some toy,  
Will gaze to find his spirit within the boy,  
Yet hath no secret with the soul pourtray'd :  
He cannot think the simple thought which play'd  
Upon those features then so frank and coy ;  
'Tis his, yet oh ! not his : and o'er the joy  
His fatherly pity bends in tears dismay'd.

Proud of his prime maybe he stand at best,  
And lightly wear his strength, or aim it high,  
In knowledge, skill and courage self-possest :—  
Yet in the pictured face a charm doth lie,  
The one thing lost more worth than all the rest,  
Which seeing, he fears to say *This child was I.*



# *The Growth of Love*

40

TEARS of love, tears of joy and tears of care,  
Comforting tears that fell uncomforted,  
Tears o'er the new-born, tears beside the dead,  
Tears of hope, pride and pity, trust and prayer,  
Tears of contrition ; all tears whatsoe'er  
Of tenderness or kindness had she shed  
Who here is pictured, ere upon her head  
The fine gold might be turn'd to silver there.

The smile that charm'd the father hath given place  
Unto the furrow'd care wrought by the son ;  
But virtue hath transform'd all change to grace :  
So that I praise the artist, who hath done  
A portrait, for my worship, of the face  
Won by the heart my father's heart that won.

41

IF I coud but forget and not recall  
So well my time of pleasure and of play,  
When ancient nature was all new and gay,  
Light as the fashion that doth last enthrall,—  
Ah mighty nature, when my heart was small,  
Nor dream'd what fearful searchings underlay  
The flowers and leafy ecstasy of May,  
The breathing summer sloth, the scented fall :

Coud I forget, then were the fight not hard,  
Press'd in the mêlée of accursed things,  
Having such help in love and such reward :  
But that 'tis I who once—'tis this that stings—  
Once dwelt within the gate that angels guard,  
Where yet I'd be had I but heavenly wings.

# *The Growth of Love*

42

WHEN I see childhood on the threshold seize  
The prize of life from age and likelihood,  
I mourn time's change that will not be withstood,  
Thinking how Christ said *Be like one of these*.  
For in the forest among many trees  
Scarce one in all is found that hath made good  
The virgin pattern of its slender wood,  
That courtesied in joy to every breeze ;

But scath'd, but knotted trunks that raise on high  
Their arms in stiff contortion, strain'd and bare ;  
Whose patriarchal crowns in sorrow sigh.  
So, little children, ye—nay nay, ye ne'er  
From me shall learn how sure the change and nigh,  
When ye shall share our strength and mourn to share.

43

WHEN parch'd with thirst, astray on sultry sand  
The traveller faints, upon his closing ear  
Steals a fantastic music : he may hear  
The babbling fountain of his native land.  
Before his eyes the vision seems to stand,  
Where at its terraced brink the maids appear,  
Who fill their deep urns at its waters clear,  
And not refuse the help of lover's hand.

O cruel jest—he cries, as some one flings  
The sparkling drops in sport or shew of ire—  
O shameless, O contempt of holy things.  
But never of their wanton play they tire,  
As not athirst they sit beside the springs,  
While he must quench in death his lost desire.

# *The Growth of Love*

44

THE image of thy love, rising on dark  
And desperate days over my sullen sea,  
Wakens again fresh hope and peace in me,  
Gleaming above upon my groaning bark.  
Whate'er my sorrow be, I then may hark  
A loving voice : whate'er my terror be,  
This heavenly comfort still I win from thee,  
To shine my lodestar that wert once my mark.

Prodigal nature makes us but to taste  
One perfect joy, which given she niggard grows ;  
And lest her precious gift should run to waste,  
Adds to its loss a thousand lesser woes :  
So to the memory of the gift that graced  
Her hand, her graceless hand more grace bestows.

45

IN this neglected, ruin'd edifice  
Of works unperfected and broken schemes,  
Where is the promise of my early dreams,  
The smile of beauty and the pearl of price ?  
No charm is left now that could once entice  
Wind-wavering fortune from her golden streams,  
And full in flight decrepit purpose seems,  
Trailing the banner of his old device.

Within the house a froze and numbing air  
Has chill'd endeavour : sickly memories reign  
In every room, and ghosts are on the stair :  
And hope behind the dusty window-pane  
Watches the days go by, and bow'd with care  
Forecasts her last reproach and mortal stain.

## *The Growth of Love*

46

ONCE I would say, before thy vision came,  
*My joy, my life, my love*, and with some kind  
Of knowledge speak, and think I knew my mind  
Of heaven and hope, and each word hit its aim.  
Whate'er their sounds be, now all mean the same,  
Denoting each the fair that none can find ;  
Or if I say them, 'tis as one long blind  
Forgets the sights that he was used to name.

Now if men speak of love, 'tis not my love ;  
Nor are their hopes nor joys mine, nor their life  
Of praise the life that I think honour of :  
Nay tho' they turn from house and child and wife  
And self, and in the thought of heaven above  
Hold, as do I, all mortal things at strife.

47

SINCE then 'tis only pity looking back,  
Fear looking forward, and the busy mind  
Will in one woeful moment more upwind  
Than lifelong years unroll of bitter or black ;  
What is man's privilege, his hoarding knack  
Of memory with foreboding so combined,  
Whereby he comes to dream he hath of kind  
The perpetuity which all things lack ?

Which but to hope is doubtful joy, to have  
Being a continuance of what, alas,  
We mourn, and scarcely bear with to the grave ;  
Or something so unknown that it o'erpass  
The thought of comfort, and the sense that gave  
Cannot consider it thro' any glass.

## *The Growth of Love*

48

COME gentle sleep, I woo thee : come and take  
Not now the child into thine arms, from fright  
Composed by drowsy tune and shaded light,  
Whom ignorant of thee thou didst nurse and make ;  
Nor now the boy, who scorn'd thee for the sake  
Of growing knowledge or mysterious night,  
Tho' with fatigue thou didst his limbs invite,  
And heavily weigh the eyes that would not wake ;

No, nor the man severe, who from his best  
Failing, alert fled to thee, that his breath,  
Blood, force and fire should come at morn redrest ;  
But me, from whom thy comfort tarrieth,  
For all my wakeful prayer sent without rest  
To thee, O shew and shadow of my death.

49

THE spirit's eager sense for sad or gay  
Filleth with what he will our vessel full :  
Be joy his bent, he waiteth not joy's day  
But like a child at any toy will pull :

If sorrow, he will weep for fancy's sake,  
And spoil heaven's plenty with forbidden care.  
What fortune most denies we slave to take ;  
Nor can fate load us more than we can bear.

Since pleasure with the having disappeareth,  
He who hath least in hand hath most at heart,  
While he keep hope : as he who alway feareth  
A grief that never comes hath yet the smart ;

And heavier far is our self-wrought distress,  
For when God sendeth sorrow, it doth bless.

# *The Growth of Love*

50

THE world comes not to an end : her city-hives  
Swarm with the tokens of a changeless trade,  
With rolling wheel, driver and flagging jade,  
Rich men and beggars, children, priests and wives.  
New homes on old are set, as lives on lives ;  
Invention with invention overlaid :  
But still or tool or toy or book or blade  
Shaped for the hand, that holds and toils and strives.

The men to-day toil as their fathers taught,  
With little better'd means ; for works depend  
On works and overlap, and thought on thought :  
And thro' all change the smiles of hope amend  
The weariest face, the same love changed in nought :  
In this thing too the world comes not to an end.

51

O MY uncared-for songs, what are ye worth,  
That in my secret book with so much care  
I write you, this one here and that one there,  
Marking the time and order of your birth ?  
How, with a fancy so unkind to mirth,  
A sense so hard, a style so worn and bare,  
Look ye for any welcome anywhere  
From any shelf or heart-home on the earth ?

Should others ask you this, say then I yearn'd  
To write you such as once, when I was young,  
Finding I should have loved and thereto turn'd.  
'Twere something yet to live again among  
The gentle youth beloved, and where I learn'd  
My art, be there remember'd for my song.

# *The Growth of Love*

52

Who takes the census of the living dead,  
Ere the day come when memory shall o'ercrowd  
The kingdom of their fame, and for that proud  
And airy people find no room nor stead?

Ere hoarding Time, that ever thrusteth back  
The fairest treasures of his ancient store,  
Better with best confound, so he may pack  
His greedy gatherings closer, more and more?

Let the true Muse rewrite her sullied page,  
And purge her story of the men of hate,  
That they go dirgeless down to Satan's rage  
With all else foul, deform'd and miscreate:

She hath full toil to keep the names of love  
Honour'd on earth, as they are bright above.

53

I HEARD great Hector sounding war's alarms,  
Where thro' the listless ghosts chiding he strode,  
As tho' the Greeks besieged his last abode,  
And he his Troy's hope still, her king-at-arms.  
But on those gentle meads, which Lethe charms  
With weary oblivion, his passion glow'd  
Like the cold night-worm's candle, and only show'd  
Such mimic flame as neither heats nor harms.

'Twas plain to read, even by those shadows quaint,  
How rude catastrophe had dim'd his day,  
And blighted all his cheer with stern complaint:  
*To arms! to arms!* what more the voice would say  
Was swallow'd in the valleys, and grew faint  
Upon the thin air, as he pass'd away.

# *The Growth of Love*

54

SINCE not the enamour'd sun with glance more fond  
Kisses the foliage of his sacred tree,  
Than doth my waking thought arise on thee,  
Loving none near thee, like thee nor beyond ;  
Nay, since I am sworn thy slave, and in the bond  
Is writ my promise of eternity ;  
Since to such high hope thou'st encouraged me,  
That if thou look but from me I despond ;

Since thou'rt my all in all, O think of this :  
Think of the dedication of my youth :  
Think of my loyalty, my joy, my bliss :  
Think of my sorrow, my despair and ruth,  
My sheer annihilation if I miss :  
Think—if thou shouldst be false—think of thy truth.

55

THESE meagre rhymes, which a returning mood  
Sometimes o'errateth, I as oft despise ;  
And knowing them illnatured, stiff and rude,  
See them as others with contemptuous eyes.

Nay, and I wonder less at God's respect  
For man, a minim jot in time and space,  
Than at the soaring faith of His elect,  
That gift of gifts, the comfort of His grace.

O truth unsearchable, O heavenly love,  
Most infinitely tender, so to touch  
The work that we can meanly reckon of :  
Surely—I say—we are favour'd overmuch.

But of this wonder, what doth most amaze  
Is that we know our love is held for praise.



# *The Growth of Love*

56

BEAUTY sat with me all the summer day,  
Awaiting the sure triumph of her eye ;  
Nor mark'd I till we parted, how, hard by,  
Love in her train stood ready for his prey.  
She, as too proud to join herself the fray,  
Trusting too much to her divine ally,  
When she saw victory tarry, chid him—'Why  
Dost thou not at one stroke this rebel slay ?'

Then generous Love, who holds my heart in fee,  
Told of our ancient truce : so from the fight  
We straight withdrew our forces, all the three.  
Baffled but not dishearten'd she took flight  
Scheming new tactics : Love came home with me,  
And prompts my measured verses as I write.

57

IN autumn moonlight, when the white air wan  
Is fragrant in the wake of summer hence,  
'Tis sweet to sit entranced, and muse thereon  
In melancholy and godlike indolence :

When the proud spirit, lull'd by mortal prime  
To fond pretence of immortality,  
Vieweth all moments from the birth of time,  
All things whate'er have been or yet shall be.

And like the garden, where the year is spent,  
The ruin of old life is full of yearning,  
Mingling poetic rapture of lament  
With flowers and sunshine of spring's sure returning ;

Only in visions of the white air wan  
By godlike fancy seized and dwelt upon.

# *The Growth of Love*

58

WHEN first I saw thee, dearest, if I say  
The spells that conjure back the hour and place,  
And evermore I look upon thy face,  
As in the spring of years long pass'd away ;  
No fading of thy beauty's rich array,  
No detriment of age on thee I trace,  
But time's defeat written in spoils of grace,  
From rivals robb'd, whom thou didst pity and slay.

So hath thy growth been, thus thy faith is true,  
Unchanged in change, still to my growing sense,  
To life's desire the same, and nothing new :  
But as thou wert in dream and prescience  
At love's arising, now thou stand'st to view  
In the broad noon of his magnificence.

59

'Twas on the very day winter took leave  
Of those fair fields I love, when to the skies  
The fragrant Earth was smiling in surprise  
At that her heaven-descended, quick reprieve,  
I wander'd forth my sorrow to relieve ;  
Yet walk'd amid sweet pleasure in such wise  
As Adam went alone in Paradise,  
Before God of His pity fashion'd Eve.

And out of tune with all the joy around  
I laid me down beneath a flowering tree,  
And o'er my senses crept a sleep profound ;  
In which it seem'd that thou wert given to me,  
Rending my body, where with hurried sound  
I feel my heart beat, when I think of thee.

# *The Growth of Love*

60

LOVE that I know, love I am wise in, love,  
My strength, my pride, my grace, my skill untaught,  
My faith here upon earth, my hope above,  
My contemplation and perpetual thought :

    The pleasure of my fancy, my heart's fire,  
My joy, my peace, my praise, my happy theme,  
The aim of all my doing, my desire  
Of being, my life by day, by night my dream :

    Love, my sweet melancholy, my distress,  
My pain, my doubt, my trouble, my despair,  
My only folly and unhappiness,  
And in my careless moments still my care :

    O love, sweet love, earthly love, love divine,  
Say'st thou to-day, O love, that thou art mine ?

61

THE dark and serious angel, who so long  
Vex'd his immortal strength in charge of me,  
Hath smiled for joy and fled in liberty  
To take his pastime with the peerless throng.  
Oft had I done his noble keeping wrong,  
Wounding his heart to wonder what might be  
God's purpose in a soul of such degree ;  
And there he had left me but for mandate strong.

    But seeing thee with me now, his task at close  
He knoweth, and wherefore he was bid to stay,  
And work confusion of so many foes :  
The thanks that he doth look for, here I pay,  
Yet fear some heavenly envy, as he goes  
Unto what great reward I cannot say.

# *The Growth of Love*

62

I WILL be what God made me, nor protest  
Against the bent of genius in my time,  
That science of my friends robs all the best,  
While I love beauty, and was born to rhyme.

Be they our mighty men, and let me dwell  
In shadow among the mighty shades of old,  
With love's forsaken palace for my cell ;  
Whence I look forth and all the world behold,

And say, These better days, in best things worse,  
This bastardy of time's magnificence,  
Will mend in fashion and throw off the curse,  
To crown new love with higher excellence.

Curs'd tho' I be to live my life alone,  
My toil is for man's joy, his joy my own.

63

I LIVE on hope and that I think do all  
Who come into this world, and since I see  
Myself in swim with such good company,  
I take my comfort whatsoever befall.  
I abide and abide, as if more stout and tall  
My spirit would grow by waiting like a tree ;  
And, clear of others' toil, it pleaseth me  
In dreams their quick ambition to forestall.

And if thro' careless eagerness I slide  
To some accomplishment, I give my voice  
Still to desire, and in desire abide.  
I have no stake abroad ; if I rejoice  
In what is done or doing, I confide  
Neither to friend nor foe my secret choice.

# *The Growth of Love*

64

YE blessed saints, that now in heaven enjoy  
The purchase of those tears, the world's disdain,  
Doth Love still with his war your peace annoy,  
Or hath Death freed you from his ancient pain?

Have ye no springtide, and no burst of May  
In flowers and leafy trees, when solemn night  
Pants with love-music, and the holy day  
Breaks on the ear with songs of heavenly light?

What make ye and what strive for? keep ye thought  
Of us, or in new excellence divine  
Is old forgot? or do ye count for nought  
What the Greek did and what the Florentine?

We keep your memories well : O in your store  
Live not our best joys treasured evermore?

65

AH heavenly joy ! But who hath ever heard,  
Who hath seen joy, or who shall ever find  
Joy's language? There is neither speech nor word ;  
Nought but itself to teach it to mankind.

Scarce in our twenty thousand painful days  
We may touch something : but there lives—beyond  
The best of art, or nature's kindest phase—  
The hope whereof our spirit is fain and fond :

The cause of beauty given to man's desires  
Writ in the expectancy of starry skies,  
The faith which gloweth in our fleeting fires,  
The aim of all the good that here we prize ;

Which but to love, pursue and pray for well  
Maketh earth heaven, and to forget it, hell.

# *The Growth of Love*

66

My wearied heart, whenever, after all,  
Its loves and yearnings shall be told complete,  
When gentle death shall bid it cease to beat,  
And from all dear illusions disenthral :  
However then thou shalt appear to call  
My fearful heart, since down at others' feet  
It bade me kneel so oft, I'll not retreat  
From thee, nor fear before thy feet to fall.

And I shall say, ' Receive this loving heart  
Which err'd in sorrow only ; and in sin  
Took no delight ; but being forced apart  
From thee, without thee hoping thee to win,  
Most prized what most thou madest as thou art  
On earth, till heaven were open to enter in.'

67

DREARY was winter, wet with changeful sting  
Of clinging snowfall and fast-flying frost ;  
And bitterer northwinds then withheld the spring,  
That dallied with her promise till 'twas lost.

A sunless and half-hearted summer drown'd  
The flowers in needful and unwelcom'd rain ;  
And Autumn with a sad smile fled uncrown'd  
From fruitless orchards and unripen'd grain.

But could the skies of this most desolate year  
In its last month learn with our love to glow,  
Men yet should rank its cloudless atmosphere  
Above the sunsets of five years ago :

Of my great praise too part should be its own,  
Now reckon'd peerless for thy love alone.

## *The Growth of Love*

68

AWAY now, lovely Muse, roam and be free :  
Our commerce ends for aye, thy task is done :  
Tho' to win thee I left all else unwon,  
Thou, whom I most have won, art not for me.  
My first desire, thou too forgone must be,  
Thou too, O much lamented now, tho' none  
Will turn to pity thy forsaken son,  
Nor thy divine sisters will weep for thee.

None will weep for thee : thou return, O Muse,  
To thy Sicilian fields : I once have been  
On thy loved hills, and where thou first didst use  
Thy sweetly balanced rhyme, O thankless queen,  
Have pluck'd and wreath'd thy flowers ; but do thou choose  
Some happier brow to wear thy garlands green.

69

ETERNAL Father, who didst all create,  
In whom we live, and to whose bosom move,  
To all men be Thy name known, which is Love,  
Till its loud praises sound at heaven's high gate.  
Perfect Thy kingdom in our passing state,  
That here on earth Thou may'st as well approve  
Our service, as Thou ownest theirs above,  
Whose joy we echo and in pain await.

Grant body and soul each day their daily bread :  
And should in spite of grace fresh woe begin,  
Even as our anger soon is past and dead  
Be Thy remembrance mortal of our sin :  
By Thee in paths of peace Thy sheep be led,  
And in the vale of terror comforted.





# SHORTER POEMS

*in Five Books*



### PREVIOUS EDITIONS

1. *Bks. I-IV.* Clarendon Press. Geo. Bell & Sons, Oct. 1890.  
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2. *Bks. I-V.* Private Press of H. Daniel. Oxford, 1894.
3. *Do. do.* Clarendon Press. George Bell & Sons, 1896.
4. *Cheap issue of 3.* 1899. Reprinted, 1899.
5. *Poetical works of R. B. Smith, Elder & Co., 1899, vol. II.*

*An account of earlier issues of first four books is given in notes at end of 5.*

# SHORTER POEMS

## BOOK I

DEDICATED TO H. E. W.

### I

#### ELEGY

CLEAR and gentle stream !  
Known and loved so long,  
That hast heard the song  
And the idle dream  
Of my boyish day ;  
While I once again  
Down thy margin stray,  
In the selfsame strain  
Still my voice is spent,  
With my old lament  
And my idle dream,  
Clear and gentle stream !

Where my old seat was  
Here again I sit,  
Where the long boughs knit  
Over stream and grass  
A translucent eaves :

## *Shorter Poems*

Where back eddies play  
Shipwreck with the leaves,  
And the proud swans stray,  
Sailing one by one  
Out of stream and sun,  
And the fish lie cool  
In their chosen pool.

Many an afternoon  
Of the summer day  
Dreaming here I lay ;  
And I know how soon,  
Idly at its hour,  
First the deep bell hums  
From the minster tower,  
And then evening comes,  
Creeping up the glade,  
With her lengthening shade,  
And the tardy boon  
Of her brightening moon.

Clear and gentle stream !  
Ere again I go  
Where thou dost not flow,  
Well does it beseem  
Thee to hear again  
Once my youthful song,  
That familiar strain  
Silent now so long :  
Be as I content  
With my old lament  
And my idle dream,  
Clear and gentle stream.

# Book I

## 2

### ELEGY

THE wood is bare : a river-mist is steeping  
The trees that winter's chill of life bereaves :  
Only their stiffened boughs break silence, weeping  
Over their fallen leaves ;

That lie upon the dank earth brown and rotten,  
Miry and matted in the soaking wet :  
Forgotten with the spring, that is forgotten  
By them that can forget.

Yet it was here we walked when ferns were springing,  
And through the mossy bank shot bud and blade :—  
Here found in summer, when the birds were singing,  
A green and pleasant shade.

'Twas here we loved in sunnier days and greener ;  
And now, in this disconsolate decay,  
I come to see her where I most have seen her,  
And touch the happier day.

For on this path, at every turn and corner,  
The fancy of her figure on me falls :  
Yet walks she with the slow step of a mourner,  
Nor hears my voice that calls.

So through my heart there winds a track of feeling,  
A path of memory, that is all her own :  
Whereto her phantom beauty ever stealing  
Haunts the sad spot alone.

About her steps the trunks are bare, the branches  
Drip heavy tears upon her downcast head ;  
And bleed from unseen wounds that no sun stanches,  
For the year's sun is dead.

## *Shorter Poems*

And dead leaves wrap the fruits that summer planted:  
And birds that love the South have taken wing.  
The wanderer, loitering o'er the scene enchanted,  
Weeps, and despairs of spring.

### 3

POOR withered rose and dry,  
Skeleton of a rose,  
Risen to testify  
To love's sad close :  
Treasured for love's sweet sake,  
That of joy past  
Thou might'st again awake  
Memory at last.  
Yet is thy perfume sweet ;  
Thy petals red  
Yet tell of summer heat,  
And the gay bed :  
Yet, yet recall the glow  
Of the gazing sun,  
When at thy bush we two  
Joined hands in one.  
But, rose, thou hast not seen,  
Thou hast not wept  
The change that passed between,  
Whilst thou hast slept.  
To me thou seemest yet  
The dead dream's thrall :  
While I live and forget  
Dream, truth and all.  
Thou art more fresh than I,  
Rose, sweet and red :  
Salt on my pale cheeks lie  
The tears I shed.

# *Book I.*

## 4

### THE CLIFF-TOP

THE cliff-top has a carpet  
Of lilac, gold and green :  
The blue sky bounds the ocean,  
The white clouds scud between.  
A flock of gulls are wheeling  
And wailing round my seat ;  
Above my head the heaven,  
The sea beneath my feet.

### THE OCEAN.

Were I a cloud I'd gather  
My skirts up in the air,  
And fly I well know whither,  
And rest I well know where.  
As pointed the star surely,  
The legend tells of old,  
Where the wise kings might offer  
Myrrh, frankincense, and gold ;  
Above the house I'd hover  
Where dwells my love, and wait  
Till haply I might spy her  
Throw back the garden-gate.  
There in the summer evening  
I would bedeck the moon ;  
I would float down and screen her  
From the sun's rays at noon ;  
And if her flowers should languish,  
Or wither in the drought  
Upon her tall white lilies  
I'd pour my heart's blood out :

## Shorter Poems

So if she wore one only,  
And shook not out the rain,  
Were I a cloud, O cloudlet,  
I had not lived in vain.

[ *A cloud speaks.*

A CLOUD.

But were I thou, O ocean,  
I would not chafe and fret  
As thou, because a limit  
To thy desires is set.

I would be blue, and gentle,  
Patient, and calm, and see  
If my smiles might not tempt her,  
My love, to come to me.

I'd make my depths transparent,  
And still, that she should lean  
O'er the boat's edge to ponder  
The sights that swam between.

I would command strange creatures,  
Of bright hue and quick fin,  
To stir the water near her,  
And tempt her bare arm in.

I'd teach her spend the summer  
With me : and I can tell,  
That, were I thou, O ocean,  
My love should love me well.

\*

\*

But on the mad cloud scudded,  
The breeze it blew so stiff ;  
And the sad ocean bellowed,  
And pounded at the cliff.



I HEARD a linnet courting  
His lady in the spring :  
His mates were idly sporting,  
Nor stayed to hear him sing  
His song of love.—  
I fear my speech distorting  
His tender love.

The phrases of his pleading  
Were full of young delight ;  
And she that gave him heeding  
Interpreted aright  
His gay, sweet notes,—  
So sadly marred in the reading,—  
His tender notes.

And when he ceased, the hearer  
Awaited the refrain,  
Till swiftly perching nearer  
He sang his song again,  
His pretty song :—  
Would that my verse spake clearer  
His tender song !

Ye happy, airy creatures !  
That in the merry spring  
Think not of what misfeatures  
Or cares the year may bring ;  
But unto love  
Resign your simple natures  
To tender love.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 6

DEAR lady, when thou frownest,  
And my true love despisest,  
And all thy vows disownest  
That sealed my venture wisest ;  
I think thy pride's displeasure  
Neglects a matchless treasure  
Exceeding price and measure.

But when again thou smilest,  
And love for love returnest,  
And fear with joy beguilest,  
And takest truth in earnest ;  
Then, though I sheer adore thee,  
The sum of my love for thee  
Seems poor, scant, and unworthy.

### 7

I WILL not let thee go.  
Ends all our month-long love in this ?  
Can it be summed up so,  
Quit in a single kiss ?  
I will not let thee go.

I will not let thee go.  
If thy words' breath could scare thy deeds,  
As the soft south can blow  
And toss the feathered seeds,  
Then might I let thee go.

I will not let thee go.  
Had not the great sun seen, I might ;  
Or were he reckoned slow  
To bring the false to light,  
Then might I let thee go.

## *Book I*

I will not let thee go.  
The stars that crowd the summer skies  
Have watched us so below  
With all their million eyes,  
I dare not let thee go.

I will not let thee go.  
Have we not chid the changeful moon,  
Now rising late, and now  
Because she set too soon,  
And shall I let thee go?

I will not let thee go.  
Have not the young flowers been content,  
Plucked ere their buds could blow,  
To seal our sacrament?  
I cannot let thee go.

I will not let thee go.  
I hold thee by too many bands :  
Thou sayest farewell, and lo !  
I have thee by the hands,  
And will not let thee go.

### 8

I FOUND to-day out walking  
The flower my love loves best.  
What, when I stooped to pluck it,  
Could dare my hand arrest?

Was it a snake lay curling  
About the root's thick crown?  
Or did some hidden bramble  
Tear my hand reaching down?

There was no snake uncurling,  
And no thorn wounded me ;  
'Twas my heart checked me, sighing  
She is beyond the sea.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 9

A POPPY grows upon the shore,  
Bursts her twin cup in summer late :  
Her leaves are glaucous-green and hoar,  
Her petals yellow, delicate.

Oft to her cousins turns her thought,  
In wonder if they care that she  
Is fed with spray for dew, and caught  
By every gale that sweeps the sea.

She has no lovers like the red,  
That dances with the noble corn :  
Her blossoms on the waves are shed,  
Where she stands shivering and forlorn.

### 10

SOMETIMES when my lady sits by me  
My rapture 's so great, that I tear  
My mind from the thought that she 's nigh me,  
And strive to forget that she 's there.  
And sometimes when she is away  
Her absence so sorely does try me,  
That I shut to my eyes, and assay  
To think she is there sitting by me.

## *Book I*

### II

LONG are the hours the sun is above,  
But when evening comes I go home to my love.

I'm away the daylight hours and more,  
Yet she comes not down to open the door.

She does not meet me upon the stair,—  
She sits in my chamber and waits for me there.

As I enter the room she does not move :  
I always walk straight up to my love ;

And she lets me take my wonted place  
At her side, and gaze in her dear dear face.

There as I sit, from her head thrown back  
Her hair falls straight in a shadow black.

Aching and hot as my tired eyes be,  
She is all that I wish to see.

And in my wearied and toil-dinned ear,  
She says all things that I wish to hear.

Dusky and duskier grows the room,  
Yet I see her best in the darker gloom.

When the winter eves are early and cold,  
The firelight hours are a dream of gold.

And so I sit here night by night,  
In rest and enjoyment of love's delight.

But a knock at the door, a step on the stair  
Will startle, alas, my love from her chair.

If a stranger comes she will not stay :  
At the first alarm she is off and away.

And he wonders, my guest, usurping her throne,  
That I sit so much by myself alone.

## *Shorter Poems*

12

Who has not walked upon the shore,  
And who does not the morning know,  
The day the angry gale is o'er,  
The hour the wind has ceased to blow?

The horses of the strong south-west  
Are pastured round his tropic tent,  
Careless how long the ocean's breast  
Sob on and sigh for passion spent.

The frightened birds, that fled inland  
To house in rock and tower and tree,  
Are gathering on the peaceful strand,  
To tempt again the sunny sea ;

Whereon the timid ships steal out  
And laugh to find their foe asleep,  
That lately scattered them about,  
And drave them to the fold like sheep.

The snow-white clouds he northward chased  
Break into phalanx, line, and band :  
All one way to the south they haste,  
The south, their pleasant fatherland.

From distant hills their shadows creep,  
Arrive in turn and mount the lea,  
And flit across the downs, and leap  
Sheer off the cliff upon the sea ;

And sail and sail far out of sight.  
But still I watch their fleecy trains,  
That piling all the south with light,  
Dapple in France the fertile plains.

## *Book I*

### 13

I MADE another song,  
In likeness of my love :  
And sang it all day long,  
Around, beneath, above ;  
I told my secret out,  
That none might be in doubt.

I sang it to the sky,  
That veiled his face to hear  
How far her azure eye  
Outdoes his splendid sphere ;  
But at her eyelids' name  
His white clouds fled for shame.

I told it to the trees,  
And to the flowers confest,  
And said not one of these  
Is like my lily drest ;  
Nor spathe nor petal dared  
Vie with her body bared.

I shouted to the sea,  
That set his waves a-prance ;  
Her floating hair is free,  
Free are her feet to dance ;  
And for thy wrath, I swear  
Her frown is more to fear.

And as in happy mood  
I walked and sang alone,  
At eve beside the wood  
I met my love, my own :  
And sang to her the song  
I had sung all day long.

# *Shorter Poems*

14

## ELEGY

ON A LADY WHOM GRIEF FOR THE DEATH OF HER  
BETROTHED KILLED

ASSEMBLE, all ye maidens, at the door,  
And all ye loves, assemble ; far and wide  
Proclaim the bridal, that proclaimed before  
Has been deferred to this late eventide :

For on this night the bride,  
The days of her betrothal over,  
Leaves the parental hearth for evermore ;  
To-night the bride goes forth to meet her lover.

Reach down the wedding vesture, that has lain  
Yet all unvisited, the silken gown :  
Bring out the bracelets, and the golden chain  
Her dearer friends provided : sere and brown  
Bring out the festal crown,  
And set it on her forehead lightly :  
Though it be withered, twine no wreath again ;  
This only is the crown she can wear rightly.

Cloke her in ermine, for the night is cold,  
And wrap her warmly, for the night is long,  
In pious hands the flaming torches hold,  
While her attendants, chosen from among  
Her faithful virgin throng,  
May lay her in her cedar litter,  
Decking her coverlet with sprigs of gold,  
Roses, and lilies white that best befit her.



## *Book I*

Sound flute and tabor, that the bridal be  
Not without music, nor with these alone ;  
But let the viol lead the melody,  
With lesser intervals, and plaintive moan  
    Of sinking semitone ;  
    And, all in choir, the virgin voices  
    Rest not from singing in skilled harmony  
The song that aye the bridegroom's ear rejoices.

Let the priests go before, arrayed in white,  
And let the dark-stoled minstrels follow slow,  
Next they that bear her, honoured on this night,  
And then the maidens, in a double row,  
    Each singing soft and low,  
    And each on high a torch upstaying :  
    Unto her lover lead her forth with light,  
With music, and with singing, and with praying.

'Twas at this sheltering hour he nightly came,  
And found her trusty window open wide,  
And knew the signal of the timorous flame,  
That long the restless curtain would not hide  
    Her form that stood beside ;  
    As scarce she dared to be delighted,  
    Listening to that sweet tale, that is no shame  
To faithful lovers, that their hearts have plighted.

But now for many days the dewy grass  
Has shown no markings of his feet at morn :  
And watching she has seen no shadow pass  
The moonlit walk, and heard no music borne  
    Upon her ear forlorn.

    In vain has she looked out to greet him ;  
    He has not come, he will not come, alas !  
So let us bear her out where she must meet him.

## *Shorter Poems*

Now to the river bank the priests are come :  
The bark is ready to receive its freight :  
Let some prepare her place therein, and some  
Embark the litter with its slender weight :

    The rest stand by in state,  
    And sing her a safe passage over ;  
While she is oared across to her new home,  
Into the arms of her expectant lover.

And thou, O lover, that art on the watch,  
Where, on the banks of the forgetful streams,  
The pale indifferent ghosts wander, and snatch  
The sweeter moments of their broken dreams,—

    Thou, when the torchlight gleams,  
    When thou shalt see the slow procession,  
And when thine ears the fitful music catch,  
Rejoice, for thou art near to thy possession.

### 15

#### RONDEAU

HIS poisoned shafts, that fresh he dips  
In juice of plants that no bee sips,  
He takes, and with his bow renown'd  
Goes out upon his hunting ground,  
Hanging his quiver at his hips.

He draws them one by one, and clips  
Their heads between his finger-tips,  
And looses with a twanging sound  
His poisoned shafts.

But if a maiden with her lips  
Suck from the wound the blood that drips,  
And drink the poison from the wound,  
The simple remedy is found  
That of their deadly terror strips  
His poisoned shafts.

## *Book I*

16

### TRIOLET

WHEN first we met we did not guess  
That Love would prove so hard a master ;  
Of more than common friendliness  
When first we met we did not guess.  
Who could foretell this sore distress,  
This irretrievable disaster  
When first we met?—We did not guess  
That Love would prove so hard a master.

17

### TRIOLET

ALL women born are so perverse  
No man need boast their love possessing.  
If nought seem better, nothing's worse :  
All women born are so perverse.  
From Adam's wife, that proved a curse  
Though God had made her for a blessing,  
All women born are so perverse  
No man need boast their love possessing.

# *Shorter Poems*

## BOOK II

TO  
THE MEMORY OF  
G. M. H.

### I

MUSE.

WILL Love again awake,  
That lies asleep so long?

POET.

O hush! ye tongues that shake  
The drowsy night with song.

MUSE.

It is a lady fair  
Whom once he deigned to praise,  
That at the door doth dare  
Her sad complaint to raise.

POET.

She must be fair of face,  
As bold of heart she seems,  
If she would match her grace  
With the delight of dreams.

## *Book II*

MUSE.

Her beauty would surprise  
Gazers on Autumn eves,  
Who watched the broad moon rise  
Upon the scattered sheaves.

POET.

O sweet must be the voice  
He shall descend to hear,  
Who doth in Heaven rejoice  
His most enchanted ear.

MUSE.

The smile, that rests to play  
Upon her lip, foretells  
What musical array  
Tricks her sweet syllables

POET.

And yet her smiles have danced  
In vain, if her discourse  
Win not the soul entranced  
In divine intercourse.

MUSE.

She will encounter all  
This trial without shame,  
Her eyes men Beauty call,  
And Wisdom is her name.

POET.

Throw back the portals then,  
Ye guards, your watch that keep,  
Love will awake again  
That lay so long asleep.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 2

#### A PASSER-BY

WHITHER, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,  
Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West,  
That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding,  
Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest?  
Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales opprest,  
When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,  
Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest  
In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling.

I there before thee, in the country that well thou knowest,  
Already arrived am inhaling the odorous air :  
I watch thee enter unerringly where thou goest,  
And anchor queen of the strange shipping there,  
Thy sails for awnings spread, thy masts bare ;  
Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the snow-capped,  
grandest  
Peak, that is over the feathery palms more fair  
Than thou, so upright, so stately, and still thou standest.

And yet, O splendid ship, unhailed and nameless,  
I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly divine  
That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage blameless,  
Thy port assured in a happier land than mine.  
But for all I have given thee, beauty enough is thine,  
As thou, aslant with trim tackle and shrouding,  
From the proud nostril curve of a prow's line  
In the offing scatterest foam, thy white sails crowding.

## *Book II*

### 3

#### LATE SPRING EVENING

I SAW the Virgin-mother clad in green,  
Walking the sprinkled meadows at sundown ;  
While yet the moon's cold flame was hung between  
The day and night, above the dusky town :  
I saw her brighter than the Western gold,  
Whereto she faced in splendour to behold.

Her dress was greener than the tenderest leaf  
That trembled in the sunset glare aglow :  
Herself more delicate than is the brief,  
Pink apple-blossom, that May showers lay low,  
And more delicious than 's the earliest streak  
The blushing rose shows of her crimson cheek.

As if to match the sight that so did please,  
A music entered, making passion fain :  
Three nightingales sat singing in the trees,  
And praised the Goddess for the fallen rain ;  
Which yet their unseen motions did arouse,  
Or parting Zephyrs shook out from the boughs.

And o'er the treetops, scattered in mid air,  
The exhausted clouds laden with crimson light  
Floated, or seemed to sleep ; and, highest there,  
One planet broke the lingering ranks of night ;  
Daring day's company, so he might spy  
The Virgin-queen once with his watchful eye.

## *Shorter Poems*

And when I saw her, then I worshipped her,  
And said,—O bounteous Spring, O beauteous Spring,  
Mother of all my years, thou who dost stir  
My heart to adore thee and my tongue to sing,  
Flower of my fruit, of my heart's blood the fire,  
Of all my satisfaction the desire !

How art thou every year more beautiful,  
Younger for all the winters thou hast cast :  
And I, for all my love grows, grow more dull,  
Decaying with each season overpast !  
In vain to teach him love must man employ thee,  
The more he learns the less he can enjoy thee.

### 4

## WOOING

I KNOW not how I came,  
New on my knightly journey,  
To win the fairest dame  
That graced my maiden tourney.

Chivalry's lovely prize  
With all men's gaze upon her,  
Why did she free her eyes  
On me, to do me honour ?

Ah ! ne'er had I my mind  
With such high hope delighted,  
Had she not first inclined,  
And with her eyes invited.

But never doubt I knew,  
Having their glance to cheer me,  
Until the day joy grew  
Too great, too sure, too near me.



## *Book II*

When hope a fear became,  
And passion, grown too tender,  
Now trembled at the shame  
Of a despised surrender ;

And where my love at first  
Saw kindness in her smiling,  
I read her pride, and cursed  
The arts of her beguiling.

Till winning less than won,  
And liker wooed than wooing,  
Too late I turned undone  
Away from my undoing ;

And stood beside the door,  
Whereto she followed, making  
My hard leave-taking more  
Hard by her sweet leave-taking.

Her speech would have betrayed  
Her thought, had mine been colder :  
Her eyes' distress had made  
A lesser lover bolder.

But no ! Fond heart, distrust,  
Cried Wisdom, and consider :  
Go free, since go thou must :—  
And so farewell I bid her.

And brisk upon my way  
I smote the stroke to sever,  
And should have lost that day  
My life's delight for ever :

But when I saw her start  
And turn aside and tremble ;—  
Ah ! she was true, her heart  
I knew did not dissemble.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 5

THERE is a hill beside the silver Thames,  
Shady with birch and beech and odorous pine :  
And brilliant underfoot with thousand gems  
Steeply the thickets to his floods decline.

    Straight trees in every place  
    Their thick tops interlace,  
And pendant branches trail their foliage fine  
    Upon his watery face.

Swift from the sweltering pasturage he flows :  
His stream, alert to seek the pleasant shade,  
Pictures his gentle purpose, as he goes  
Straight to the caverned pool his toil has made.

    His winter floods lay bare  
    The stout roots in the air :  
His summer streams are cool, when they have played  
    Among their fibrous hair.

A rushy island guards the sacred bower,  
And hides it from the meadow, where in peace .  
The lazy cows wrench many a scented flower,  
Robbing the golden market of the bees :  
    And laden barges float  
    By banks of myosote ;  
And scented flag and golden flower-de-lys  
    Delay the loitering boat.

And on this side the island, where the pool  
Eddies away, are tangled mass on mass  
The water-weeds, that net the fishes cool,  
And scarce allow a narrow stream to pass ;  
    Where spreading crowfoot mars  
    The drowning nenuphars,  
Waving the tassels of her silken grass  
    Below her silver stars.

## *Book II*

But in the purple pool there nothing grows,  
Not the white water-lily spoked with gold ;  
Though best she loves the hollows, and well knows  
On quiet streams her broad shields to unfold :

    Yet should her roots but try  
    Within these deeps to lie,  
Not her long reaching stalk could ever hold  
    Her waxen head so high.

Sometimes an angler comes, and drops his hook  
Within its hidden depths, and 'gainst a tree  
Leaning his rod, reads in some pleasant book,  
Forgetting soon his pride of fishery ;

    And dreams, or falls asleep,  
    While curious fishes peep  
About his nibbled bait, or scornfully  
    Dart off and rise and leap.

And sometimes a slow figure 'neath the trees,  
In ancient-fashioned smock, with tottering care  
Upon a staff propping his weary knees,  
May by the pathway of the forest fare :

    As from a buried day  
    Across the mind will stray  
Some perishing mute shadow,—and unaware  
    He passeth on his way.

Else, he that wishes solitude is safe,  
Whether he bathe at morning in the stream :  
Or lead his love there when the hot hours chafe  
The meadows, busy with a blurring steam ;

    Or watch, as fades the light,  
    The gibbous moon grow bright,  
Until her magic rays dance in a dream,  
    And glorify the night.

## *Shorter Poems*

Where is this bower beside the silver Thames?  
O pool and flowery thickets, hear my vow!  
O trees of freshest foliage and straight stems,  
No sharer of my secret I allow:

Lest ere I come the while  
Strange feet your shades defile;  
Or lest the burly oarsman turn his prow  
Within your guardian isle.

### 6

## A WATER-PARTY

LET us, as by this verdant bank we float,  
Search down the marge to find some shady pool  
Where we may rest awhile and moor our boat,  
And bathe our tired limbs in the waters cool.

Beneath the noonday sun,  
Swiftly, O river, run!

Here is a mirror for Narcissus, see!  
I cannot sound it, plumbing with my oar.  
Lay the stern in beneath this bowering tree!  
Now, stepping on this stump, we are ashore.

Guard, Hamadryades,  
Our clothes laid by your trees!

How the birds warble in the woods! I pick  
The waxen lilies, diving to the root.  
But swim not far in the stream, the weeds grow thick,  
And hot on the bare head the sunbeams shoot.

Until our sport be done,  
O merry birds, sing on!

If but to-night the sky be clear, the moon  
Will serve us well, for she is near the full.  
We shall row safely home; only too soon,—  
So pleasant 'tis, whether we float or pull.

To guide us through the night,  
O summer moon, shine bright!

## Book II

### 7

#### THE DOWNS

O BOLD majestic downs, smooth, fair and lonely;  
O still solitude, only matched in the skies :  
    Perilous in steep places,  
    Soft in the level races,  
Where sweeping in phantom silence the cloudland flies;  
With lovely undulation of fall and rise ;  
    Entrenched with thickets thorned,  
By delicate miniature dainty flowers adorned !

I climb your crown, and lo ! a sight surprising  
Of sea in front uprising, steep and wide :  
    And scattered ships ascending  
    To heaven, lost in the blending  
Of distant blues, where water and sky divide,  
Urging their engines against wind and tide,  
    And all so small and slow  
They seem to be wearily pointing the way they would go.

The accumulated murmur of soft plashing,  
Of waves on rocks dashing and searching the sands,  
    Takes my ear, in the veering  
    Baffled wind, as rearing  
Upright at the cliff, to the gullies and rifts he stands;  
And his conquering surges scour out over the lands;  
    While again at the foot of the downs  
He masses his strength to recover the topmost crowns.

# *Shorter Poems*

## 8

### SPRING

#### ODE I

##### INVITATION TO THE COUNTRY

AGAIN with pleasant green  
Has Spring renewed the wood,  
And where the bare trunks stood  
Are leafy arbours seen ;  
And back on budding boughs  
Come birds, to court and pair,  
Whose rival amorous vows  
Amaze the scented air.

The freshets are unbound,  
And leaping from the hill,  
Their mossy banks refill  
With streams of light and sound :  
And scattered down the meads,  
From hour to hour unfold  
A thousand buds and beads  
In stars and cups of gold.

Now hear, and see, and note,  
The farms are all astir,  
And every labourer  
Has doffed his winter coat ;  
And how with specks of white  
They dot the brown hillside,  
Or jaunt and sing outright  
As by their teams they stride.

## *Book II*

They sing to feel the Sun  
Regain his wanton strength ;  
To know the year at length  
Rewards their labour done ;  
To see the rootless stake  
They set bare in the ground,  
Burst into leaf, and shake  
Its grateful scent around.

Ah now an evil lot  
Is his, who toils for gain,  
Where crowded chimneys stain  
The heavens his choice forgot ;  
'Tis on the blighted trees  
That deck his garden dim,  
And in the tainted breeze,  
That sweet Spring comes to him.

Far sooner I would choose  
The life of brutes that bask,  
Than set myself a task,  
Which inborn powers refuse :  
And rather far enjoy  
The body, than invent  
A duty, to destroy  
The ease which nature sent ;

And country life I praise,  
And lead, because I find  
The philosophic mind  
Can take no middle ways ;  
She will not leave her love  
To mix with men, her art  
Is all to strive above  
The crowd, or stand apart.

## *Shorter Poems*

Thrice happy he, the rare  
Prometheus, who can play  
With hidden things, and lay  
New realms of nature bare ;  
Whose venturous step has trod  
Hell underfoot, and won  
A crown from man and God  
For all that he has done.—

That highest gift of all,  
Since crabbèd fate did flood  
My heart with sluggish blood,  
I look not mine to call ;  
But, like a truant freed,  
Fly to the woods, and claim  
A pleasure for the deed  
Of my inglorious name :

And am content, denied  
The best, in choosing right ;  
For Nature can delight  
Fancies unoccupied  
With ecstasies so sweet  
As none can even guess,  
Who walk not with the feet  
Of joy in idleness.

Then leave your joyless ways,  
My friend, my joys to see.  
The day you come shall be  
The choice of chosen days :  
You shall be lost, and learn  
New being, and forget  
The world, till your return  
Shall bring your first regret.



# *Book II*

9

## SPRING

ODE II

REPLY

BEHOLD ! the radiant Spring,  
In splendour decked anew,  
Down from her heaven of blue  
Returns on sunlit wing :  
The zephyrs of her train  
In fleecy clouds disport,  
And birds to greet her reign  
Summon their silvan court.

And here in street and square  
The prisoned trees contest  
Her favour with the best,  
To robe themselves full fair :  
And forth their buds provoke,  
Forgetting winter brown,  
And all the mire and smoke  
That wrapped the dingy town.

Now he that loves indeed  
His pleasure must awake,  
Lest any pleasure take  
Its flight, and he not heed ;  
For of his few short years  
Another now invites  
His hungry soul, and cheers  
His life with new delights.

## *Shorter Poems*

And who loves Nature more  
Than he, whose painful art  
Has taught and skilled his heart  
To read her skill and lore?  
Whose spirit leaps more high,  
Plucking the pale primrose,  
Than his whose feet must fly  
The pasture where it grows?

One long in city pent  
Forgets, or must complain:  
But think not I can stain  
My heaven with discontent;  
Nor wallow with that sad,  
Backsliding herd, who cry  
That Truth must make man bad,  
And pleasure is a lie.

Rather while Reason lives  
To mark me from the beast,  
I'll teach her serve at least  
To heal the wound she gives:  
Nor need she strain her powers  
Beyond a common flight,  
To make the passing hours  
Happy from morn till night.

Since health our toil rewards,  
And strength is labour's prize,  
I hate not, nor despise  
The work my lot accords;  
Nor fret with fears unkind  
The tender joys, that bless  
My hard-won peace of mind,  
In hours of idleness.

## *Book II*

Then what charm company  
Can give, know I,—if wine  
Go round, or throats combine  
To set dumb music free.  
Or deep in wintertide  
When winds without make moan,  
I love my own fireside  
Not least when most alone.

Then oft I turn the page  
In which our country's name,  
Spoiling the Greek of fame,  
Shall sound in every age :  
Or some Terentian play  
Renew, whose excellent  
Adjusted folds betray  
How once Menander went.

Or if grave study suit  
The yet unwearied brain,  
Plato can teach again,  
And Socrates dispute ;  
Till fancy in a dream  
Confront their souls with mine,  
Crowning the mind supreme,  
And her delights divine.

While pleasure yet can be  
Pleasant, and fancy sweet,  
I bid all care retreat  
From my philosophy ;  
Which, when I come to try  
Your simpler life, will find,  
I doubt not, joys to vie  
With those I leave behind.

# Shorter Poems

10

## ELEGY

### AMONG THE TOMBS

SAD, sombre place, beneath whose antique yews  
I come, unquiet sorrows to control;  
Amid thy silent mossgrown graves to muse  
With my neglected solitary soul;  
And to poetic sadness care confide,  
Trusting sweet Melancholy for my guide :  
They will not ask why in thy shades I stray,  
Among the tombs finding my rare delight,  
Beneath the sun at indolent noonday,  
Or in the windy moon-enchanted night,  
Who have once reined in their steeds at any shrine,  
And given them water from the well divine.—

The orchards are all ripened, and the sun  
Spots the deserted gleanings with decay;  
The seeds are perfected : his work is done,  
And Autumn lingers but to outsmile the May ;  
Bidding his tinted leaves glide, bidding clear  
Unto clear skies the birds applaud the year.

Lo, here I sit, and to the world I call,  
The world my solemn fancy leaves behind,  
Come ! pass within the inviolable wall,  
Come pride, come pleasure, come distracted mind ;  
Within the fated refuge, hither, turn,  
And learn your wisdom ere 'tis late to learn.

Come with me now, and taste the fount of tears ;  
For many eyes have sanctified this spot,  
Where grief's unbroken lineage endears  
The charm untimely Folly injures not,  
And slays the intruding thoughts, that overleap  
The simple fence its holiness doth keep.

## *Book II*

Read the worn names of the forgotten dead,  
Their pompous legends will no smile awake ;  
Even the vainglorious title o'er the head  
Wins its pride pardon for its sorrow's sake ;  
And carven Loves scorn not their dusty prize,  
Though fallen so far from tender sympathies.

Here where a mother laid her only son,  
Here where a lover left his bride, below  
The treasured names their own are added on  
To those whom they have followed long ago :  
Sealing the record of the tears they shed,  
That 'where their treasure there their hearts are fled.'

Grandfather, father, son, and then again  
Child, grandchild, and great-grandchild laid beneath  
Numbered in turn among the sons of men,  
And gathered each one in his turn to death :  
While he that occupies their house and name  
To-day,—to-morrow too their grave shall claim.

And where are all their spirits? Ah ! could we tell  
The manner of our being when we die,  
And see beyond the scene we know so well  
The country that so much obscured doth lie !  
With brightest visions our fond hopes repair,  
Or crown our melancholy with despair ;

From death, still death, still would a comfort come :  
Since of this world the essential joy must fall  
In all distributed, in each thing some,  
In nothing all, and all complete in all ;  
Till pleasure, ageing to her full increase,  
Puts on perfection, and is throned in peace.

## *Shorter Poems*

Yea, sweetest peace, unsought-for, undesired,  
Loathed and misnamed, 'tis thee I worship here :  
Though in most black habiliments attired,  
Thou art sweet peace, and thee I cannot fear.  
Nay, were my last hope quenched, I here would sit  
And praise the annihilation of the pit.

Nor quickly disenchanted will my feet  
Back to the busy town return, but yet  
Linger, ere I my loving friends would greet,  
Or touch their hands, or share without regret  
The warmth of that kind hearth, whose sacred ties  
Only shall dim with tears my dying eyes.

### I I

## DEJECTION

WHEREFORE to-night so full of care,  
My soul, revolving hopeless strife,  
Pointing at hindrance, and the bare  
Painful escapes of fitful life?

Shaping the doom that may befall  
By precedent of terror past :  
By love dishonoured, and the call  
Of friendship slighted at the last?

By treasured names, the little store  
That memory out of wreck could save  
Of loving hearts, that gone before  
Call their old comrade to the grave?

O soul, be patient : thou shalt find  
A little matter mend all this ;  
Some strain of music to thy mind,  
Some praise for skill not spent amiss.

## *Book II*

Again shall pleasure overflow  
Thy cup with sweetness, thou shalt taste  
Nothing but sweetness, and shalt grow  
Half sad for sweetness run to waste.

O happy life ! I hear thee sing,  
O rare delight of mortal stuff !  
I praise my days for all they bring,  
Yet are they only not enough.

### 12

#### MORNING HYMN

O GOLDEN Sun, whose ray  
My path illumineth :  
Light of the circling day,  
Whose night is birth and death :

That dost not stint the prime  
Of wise and strong, nor stay  
The changeful ordering time,  
That brings their sure decay :

Though thou, the central sphere,  
Dost seem to turn around  
Thy creature world, and near  
As father fond art found ;

Thereon, as from above  
To shine, and make rejoice  
With beauty, life, and love,  
The garden of thy choice,

## *Shorter Poems*

To dress the jocund Spring  
With bounteous promise gay  
Of hotter months, that bring  
The full perfected day ;

To touch with richest gold  
The ripe fruit, ere it fall ;  
And smile through cloud and cold  
On Winter's funeral.

Now with resplendent flood  
Gladden my waking eyes,  
And stir my slothful blood  
To joyous enterprise.

Arise, arise, as when  
At first God said **LIGHT BE !**  
That He might make us men  
With eyes His light to see.

Scatter the clouds that hide  
The face of heaven, and show  
Where sweet Peace doth abide,  
Where Truth and Beauty grow.

Awaken, cheer, adorn,  
Invite, inspire, assure  
The joys that praise thy morn,  
The toil thy noons mature :

And soothe the eve of day,  
That darkens back to death ;  
O golden Sun, whose ray  
Our path illumineth !



## *Book II*

13

I HAVE loved flowers that fade,  
Within whose magic tents  
Rich hues have marriage made  
With sweet unmemoried scents :  
A honeymoon delight,—  
A joy of love at sight,  
That ages in an hour :—  
My song be like a flower !

I have loved airs, that die  
Before their charm is writ  
Along a liquid sky  
Trembling to welcome it.  
Notes, that with pulse of fire  
Proclaim the spirit's desire,  
Then die, and are nowhere :—  
My song be like an air !

Die, song, die like a breath,  
And wither as a bloom :  
Fear not a flowery death,  
Dread not an airy tomb !  
Fly with delight, fly hence !  
'Twas thine love's tender sense  
To feast ; now on thy bier  
Beauty shall shed a tear.

# *Shorter Poems*

## BOOK III

TO

R. W. D.

I

O MY vague desires !

Ye lambent flames of the soul, her offspring fires :  
That are my soul herself in pangs sublime  
Rising and flying to heaven before her time :

What doth tempt you forth  
To drown in the south or shiver in the frosty north ?  
What seek ye or find ye in your random flying,  
Ever soaring aloft, soaring and dying ?

Joy, the joy of flight !  
They hide in the sun, they flare and dance in the night ;  
Gone up, gone out of sight : and ever again  
Follow fresh tongues of fire, fresh pangs of pain.

Ah ! they burn my soul,  
The fires, devour my soul that once was whole :  
She is scattered in fiery phantoms day by day,  
But whither, whither ? ay whither ? away, away !

Could I but control  
These vague desires, these leaping flames of the soul :  
Could I but quench the fire : ah ! could I stay  
My soul that flieth, alas, and dieth away !

## *Book III*

### 2

#### LONDON SNOW

WHEN men were all asleep the snow came flying,  
In large white flakes falling on the city brown,  
Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,

Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town ;  
Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing ;  
Lazily and incessantly floating down and down :

Silently sifting and veiling road, roof and railing ;  
Hiding difference, making unevenness even,  
Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.

All night it fell, and when full inches seven  
It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,  
The clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven ;

And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness  
Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare :  
The eye marvelled—marvelled at the dazzling whiteness ;

The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn air ;  
No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,  
And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.

Then boys I heard, as they went to school, calling,  
They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze  
Their tongues with tasting, their hands with snowballing ;

Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the knees ;  
Or peering up from under the white-mossed wonder,  
'O look at the trees !' they cried, 'O look at the trees !'

With lessened load a few carts creak and blunder,  
Following along the white deserted way,  
A country company long dispersed asunder :

When now already the sun, in pale display  
Standing by Paul's high dome, spread forth below  
His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day.

## *Shorter Poems*

For now doors open, and war is waged with the snow ;  
And trains of sombre men, past tale of number,  
Tread long brown paths, as toward their toil they go :  
But even for them awhile no cares encumber  
Their minds diverted ; the daily word is unspoken,  
The daily thoughts of labour and sorrow slumber  
At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for the charm  
they have broken.

### 3

#### THE VOICE OF NATURE

I STAND on the cliff and watch the veiled sun paling  
A silver field afar in the mournful sea,  
The scourge of the surf, and plaintive gulls sailing  
At ease on the gale that smites the shuddering lea :  
Whose smile severe and chaste  
June never hath stirred to vanity, nor age defaced.  
In lofty thought strive, O spirit, for ever :  
In courage and strength pursue thine own endeavour.  
Ah ! if it were only for thee, thou restless ocean  
Of waves that follow and roar, the sweep of the tides ;  
Wer't only for thee, impetuous wind, whose motion  
Precipitate all o'errides, and turns, nor abides :  
For you sad birds and fair,  
Or only for thee, bleak cliff, erect in the air ;  
Then well could I read wisdom in every feature,  
O well should I understand the voice of Nature.  
But far away, I think, in the Thames valley,  
The silent river glides by flowery banks :  
And birds sing sweetly in branches that arch an alley  
Of cloistered trees, moss-grown in their ancient ranks :  
Where if a light air stray,  
'Tis laden with hum of bees and scent of may.

## Book III

Love and peace be thine, O spirit, for ever :  
Serve thy sweet desire : despise endeavour.

And if it were only for thee, entrancèd river,  
That scarce dost rock the lily on her airy stem,  
Or stir a wave to murmur, or a rush to quiver ;  
Wer't but for the woods, and summer asleep in them :  
For you my bowers green,  
My hedges of rose and woodbine, with walks between,  
Then well could I read wisdom in every feature,  
O well should I understand the voice of Nature.

### 4

## ON A DEAD CHILD

PERFECT little body, without fault or stain on thee,  
With promise of strength and manhood full and fair !  
Though cold and stark and bare,  
The bloom and the charm of life doth awhile remain on thee.

Thy mother's treasure wert thou ;—alas ! no longer  
To visit her heart with wondrous joy ; to be  
Thy father's pride ;—ah, he  
Must gather his faith together, and his strength make stronger.

To me, as I move thee now in the last duty,  
Dost thou with a turn or gesture anon respond ;  
Startling my fancy fond  
With a chance attitude of the head, a freak of beauty.

Thy hand clasps, as 'twas wont, my finger, and holds it :  
But the grasp is the clasp of Death, heartbreaking and stiff ;  
Yet feels to my hand as if  
'Twas still thy will, thy pleasure and trust that enfolds it.

## *Shorter Poems*

So I lay thee there, thy sunken eyelids closing,—

Go lie thou there in thy coffin, thy last little bed!—

Propping thy wise, sad head,

Thy firm, pale hands across thy chest disposing.

So quiet! doth the change content thee?—Death, whither  
hath he taken thee?

To a world, do I think, that rights the disaster of this?

The vision of which I miss,

Who weep for the body, and wish but to warm thee and  
awaken thee?

Ah! little at best can all our hopes avail us

To lift this sorrow, or cheer us, when in the dark,

Unwilling, alone we embark,

And the things we have seen and have known and have  
heard of, fail us.

### 5

#### THE PHILOSOPHER TO HIS MISTRESS

BECAUSE thou canst not see,

Because thou canst not know

The black and hopeless woe

That hath encompassed me:

Because, should I confess

The thought of my despair,

My words would wound thee less

Than swords can hurt the air:

Because with thee I seem

As one invited near

To taste the faery cheer

Of spirits in a dream;

Of whom he knoweth nought

Save that they vie to make

All motion, voice and thought

A pleasure for his sake:

### *Book III*

Therefore more sweet and strange  
Has been the mystery  
Of thy long love to me,  
That doth not quit, nor change,  
Nor tax my solemn heart,  
That kisseth in a gloom,  
Knowing not who thou art  
That givest, nor to whom.

Therefore the tender touch  
Is more ; more dear the smile :  
And thy light words beguile  
My wisdom overmuch :  
And O with swiftness fly  
The fancies of my song  
To happy worlds, where I  
Still in thy love belong.

#### 6

HASTE on, my joys ! your treasure lies  
In swift, unceasing flight.  
O haste : for while your beauty flies  
I seize your full delight.  
Lo ! I have seen the scented flower,  
Whose tender stems I cull,  
For her brief date and meted hour  
Appear more beautiful.

O youth, O strength, O most divine  
For that so short ye prove ;  
Were but your rare gifts longer mine,  
Ye scarce would win my love.  
Nay, life itself the heart would spurn,  
Did once the days restore  
The days, that once enjoyed return,  
Return—ah ! nevermore.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 7

#### INDOLENCE

WE left the city when the summer day  
Had verged already on its hot decline,  
And charmèd Indolence in languor lay  
In her gay gardens, 'neath her towers divine :  
'Farewell,' we said, 'dear city of youth and dream !'  
And in our boat we stepped and took the stream.

All through that idle afternoon we strayed  
Upon our proposed travel well begun,  
As loitering by the woodland's dreamy shade,  
Past shallow islets floating in the sun,  
Or searching down the banks for rarer flowers  
We lingered out the pleasurable hours.

Till when that loveliest came, which mowers home  
Turns from their longest labour, as we steered  
Along a straitened channel flecked with foam,  
We lost our landscape wide, and slowly neared  
An ancient bridge, that like a blind wall lay  
Low on its buried vaults to block the way.

Then soon the narrow tunnels broader showed,  
Where with its arches three it sucked the mass  
Of water, that in swirl thereunder flowed,  
Or stood piled at the piers waiting to pass ;  
And pulling for the middle span, we drew  
The tender blades aboard and floated through.

But past the bridge what change we found below !  
The stream, that all day long had laughed and played  
Betwixt the happy shires, ran dark and slow,  
And with its easy flood no murmur made :  
And weeds spread on its surface, and about  
The stagnant margin reared their stout heads out.



### *Book III*

Upon the left high elms, with giant wood  
Skirting the water-meadows, interwove  
Their slumbrous crowns, o'ershadowing where they stood  
The floor and heavy pillars of the grove :  
And in the shade, through reeds and sedges dank,  
A footpath led along the moated bank.

Across, all down the right, an old brick wall,  
Above and o'er the channel, red did lean ;  
Here buttressed up, and bulging there to fall,  
Tufted with grass and plants and lichen green ;  
And crumbling to the flood, which at its base  
Slid gently nor disturbed its mirrored face.

Sheer on the wall the houses rose, their backs  
All windowless, neglected and awry,  
With tottering coigns, and crooked chimney stacks ;  
And here and there an unused door, set high  
Above the fragments of its mouldering stair,  
With rail and broken step led out on air.

Beyond, deserted wharfs and vacant sheds,  
With empty boats and barges moored along,  
And rafts half-sunken, fringed with weedy shreds,  
And sodden beams, once soaked to season strong.  
No sight of man, nor sight of life, no stroke,  
No voice the somnolence and silence broke.

Then I who rowed leant on my oar, whose drip  
Fell without sparkle, and I rowed no more ;  
And he that steered moved neither hand nor lip,  
But turned his wondering eye from shore to shore ;  
And our trim boat let her swift motion die,  
Between the dim reflections floating by.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 8

I PRAISE the tender flower,  
That on a mournful day  
Bloomed in my garden bower  
And made the winter gay.  
Its loveliness contented  
My heart tormented.

I praise the gentle maid  
Whose happy voice and smile  
To confidence betrayed  
My doleful heart awhile :  
And gave my spirit deploring  
Fresh wings for soaring.

The maid for very fear  
Of love I durst not tell :  
The rose could never hear,  
Though I bespake her well :  
So in my song I bind them  
For all to find them.

### 9

A WINTER's night with the snow about :  
'Twas silent within and cold without :  
Both father and mother to bed were gone :  
The son sat yet by the fire alone.

He gazed on the fire, and dreamed again  
Of one that was now no more among men :  
As still he sat and never aware  
How close was the spirit beside his chair.

### *Book III*

Nay, sad were his thoughts, for he wept and said  
Ah, woe for the dead ! ah, woe for the dead !  
How heavy the earth lies now on her breast,  
The lips that I kissed, and the hand I pressed.

The spirit he saw not, he could not hear  
The comforting word she spake in his ear :  
His heart in the grave with her mouldering clay  
No welcome gave—and she fled away.

#### 10

My bed and pillow are cold,  
My heart is faint with dread,  
The air hath an odour of mould,  
I dream I lie with the dead :

I cannot move,  
O come to me, Love,  
Or else I am dead.

The feet I hear on the floor  
Tread heavily overhead :  
O Love, come down to the door,  
Come, Love, come, ere I be dead :  
Make shine thy light,  
O Love, in the night ;  
Or else I am dead.

#### 11

O THOU unfaithful, still as ever dearest  
That in thy beauty to my eyes appearest  
In fancy rising now to re-awaken  
My love unshaken ;

All thou 'st forgotten, but no change can free thee,  
No hate unmake thee ; as thou wert I see thee,  
And am contented, eye from fond eye meeting  
Its ample greeting.

## *Shorter Poems*

O thou my star of stars, among things wholly  
Devoted, sacred, dim and melancholy,  
The only joy of all the joys I cherished  
That hast not perished,

Why now on others squand'rest thou the treasure,  
That to be jealous of is still my pleasure :  
As still I dream 'tis me whom thou invitest,  
Me thou delightest ?

But day by day my joy hath feebler being,  
The fading picture tires my painful seeing,  
And faery fancy leaves her habitation  
To desolation.

Of two things open left for lovers parted  
'Twas thine to scorn the past and go lighthearted :  
But I would ever dream I still possess it,  
And thus caress it.

### 12

THOU didst delight my eyes :  
Yet who am I ? nor first  
Nor last nor best, that durst  
Once dream of thee for prize ;  
Nor this the only time  
Thou shalt set love to rhyme.

Thou didst delight my ear :  
Ah ! little praise ; thy voice  
Makes other hearts rejoice,  
Makes all ears glad that hear ;  
And short my joy : but yet,  
O song, do not forget.

## *Book III*

For what wert thou to me?  
How shall I say? The moon,  
That poured her midnight noon  
Upon his wrecking sea;—  
A sail, that for a day  
Has cheered the castaway.

### 13

Joy, sweetest lifeborn joy, where dost thou dwell?  
Upon the formless moments of our being  
Flitting, to mock the ear that heareth well,  
To escape the trained eye that strains in seeing,  
Dost thou fly with us whither we are fleeing;  
Or home in our creations, to withstand  
Black-wingèd death, that slays the making hand?

The making mind, that must untimely perish  
Amidst its work which time may not destroy,  
The beauteous forms which man shall love to cherish,  
The glorious songs that combat earth's annoy?  
Thou dost dwell here, I know, divinest Joy:  
But they who build thy towers fair and strong,  
Of all that toil, feel most of care and wrong.

Sense is so tender, O and hope so high,  
That common pleasures mock their hope and sense;  
And swifter than doth lightning from the sky  
The ecstasy they pine for flashes hence,  
Leaving the darkness and the woe immense,  
Wherewith it seems no thread of life was woven,  
Nor doth the track remain where once 'twas cloven.

And heaven and all the stable elements  
That guard God's purpose mock us, though the mind  
Be spent in searching: for his old intents  
We see were never for our joy designed:  
They shine as doth the bright sun on the blind,

## *Shorter Poems*

Or like his pensioned stars, that hymn above  
His praise, but not toward us, that God is Love.

For who so well hath wooed the maiden hours  
As quite to have won the worth of their rich show,  
To rob the night of mystery, or the flowers  
Of their sweet delicacy ere they go?  
Nay, even the dear occasion when we know,  
We miss the joy, and on the gliding day  
The special glories float and pass away.

Only life's common plod : still to repair  
The body and the thing which perisheth :  
The soil, the smutch, the toil and ache and wear,  
The grinding enginry of blood and breath,  
Pain's random darts, the heartless spade of death ;  
All is but grief, and heavily we call  
On the last terror for the end of all.

Then comes the happy moment : not a stir  
In any tree, no portent in the sky :  
The morn doth neither hasten nor defer,  
The morrow hath no name to call it by,  
But life and joy are one,—we know not why,—  
As though our very blood long breathless lain  
Had tasted of the breath of God again.

And having tasted it I speak of it,  
And praise him thinking how I trembled then  
When his touch strengthened me, as now I sit  
In wonder, reaching out beyond my ken,  
Reaching to turn the day back, and my pen  
Urging to tell a tale which told would seem  
The witless phantasy of them that dream.

### *Book III*

But O most blessèd truth, for truth thou art,  
Abide thou with me till my life shall end.  
Divinity hath surely touched my heart ;  
I have possessed more joy than earth can lend :  
I may attain what time shall never spend.  
Only let not my duller days destroy  
The memory of thy witness and my joy.

#### 14

THE full moon from her cloudless skies  
Turneth her face, I think, on me ;  
And from the hour when she doth rise  
Till when she sets, none else will see.

One only other ray she hath,  
That makes an angle close with mine,  
And glancing down its happy path  
Upon another spot doth shine.

But that ray too is sent to me,  
For where it lights there dwells my heart :  
And if I were where I would be,  
Both rays would shine, love, where thou art.

#### 15

AWAKE, my heart, to be loved, awake, awake !  
The darkness silvers away, the morn doth break,  
It leaps in the sky : unrisen lustres slake  
The o'ertaken moon. Awake, O heart, awake !

She too that loveth awaketh and hopes for thee ;  
Her eyes already have sped the shades that flee,  
Already they watch the path thy feet shall take :  
Awake, O heart, to be loved, awake, awake !

And if thou tarry from her,—if this could be,—  
She cometh herself, O heart, to be loved, to thee ;  
For thee would unashamèd herself forsake :  
Awake to be loved, my heart, awake, awake !

## Shorter Poems

Awake, the land is scattered with light, and see,  
Uncanopied sleep is flying from field and tree :  
And blossoming boughs of April in laughter shake ;  
Awake, O heart, to be loved, awake, awake !

Lo all things wake and tarry and look for thee :  
She looketh and saith, 'O sun, now bring him to me.  
Come more adored, O adored, for his coming's sake,  
And awake my heart to be loved : awake, awake !'

16

### SONG

I LOVE my lady's eyes  
Above the beauties rare  
She most is wont to prize,  
Above her sunny hair,  
And all that face to face  
Her glass repeats of grace.

For those are still the same  
To her and all that see :  
But oh ! her eyes will flame  
When they do look on me :  
And so above the rest  
I love her eyes the best.

Now say, [*Say, O say ! saith the music*]  
    who likes my song ?—  
I knew you by your eyes,  
That rest on nothing long,  
And have forgot surprise ;  
And stray [*Stray, O stray ! saith the music*]  
    as mine will stray,  
The while my love's away.



## *Book III*

17

SINCE thou, O fondest and truest,  
Hast loved me best and longest,  
And now with trust the strongest  
The joy of my heart renewest ;

Since thou art dearer and dearer  
While other hearts grow colder  
And ever, as love is older,  
More lovingly drawest nearer :

Since now I see in the measure  
Of all my giving and taking,  
Thou wert my hand in the making,  
The sense and soul of my pleasure ;

The good I have ne'er repaid thee  
In heaven I pray be recorded,  
And all thy love rewarded  
By God, thy master that made thee.

18

THE evening darkens over  
After a day so bright  
The windcapt waves discover  
That wild will be the night.  
There's sound of distant thunder.

The latest sea-birds hover  
Along the cliff's sheer height ;  
As in the memory wander  
Last flutterings of delight,  
White wings lost on the white.

## *Shorter Poems*

There's not a ship in sight ;  
And as the sun goes under  
Thick clouds conspire to cover  
The moon that should rise yonder.  
Thou art alone, fond lover.

### 19

O YOUTH whose hope is high,  
Who dost to Truth aspire,  
Whether thou live or die,  
O look not back nor tire.

Thou that art bold to fly  
Through tempest, flood and fire,  
Nor dost not shrink to try  
Thy heart in torments dire :

If thou canst Death defy,  
If thy Faith is entire,  
Press onward, for thine eye  
Shall see thy heart's desire.

Beauty and love are nigh,  
And with their deathless quire  
Soon shall thine eager cry  
Be numbered and expire.

## BOOK IV

TO

L. B. C. I. M.

### I

I LOVE all beauteous things,  
I seek and adore them ;  
God hath no better praise,  
And man in his hasty days  
Is honoured for them.

I too will something make  
And joy in the making ;  
Altho' to-morrow it seem  
Like the empty words of a dream  
Remembered on waking.

### 2

My spirit sang all day  
O my joy.  
Nothing my tongue could say,  
Only My joy !

My heart an echo caught—  
O my joy—  
And spake, Tell me thy thought,  
Hide not thy joy.

## *Shorter Poems*

My eyes gan peer around,—  
O my joy—  
What beauty hast thou found?  
Shew us thy joy.

My jealous ears grew whist;—  
O my joy—  
Music from heaven is 't,  
Sent for our joy?

She also came and heard;  
O my joy,  
What, said she, is this word?  
What is thy joy?

And I replied, O see,  
O my joy,  
'Tis thee, I cried, 'tis thee:  
Thou art my joy.

### 3

THE upper skies are palest blue  
Mottled with pearl and fretted snow:  
With tattered fleece of inky hue  
Close overhead the storm-clouds go.

Their shadows fly along the hill  
And o'er the crest mount one by one:  
The whitened planking of the mill  
Is now in shade and now in sun.

## *Book IV*

### 4

THE clouds have left the sky,  
The wind hath left the sea,  
The half-moon up on high  
Shrinketh her face of dree

She lightens on the comb  
Of leaden waves, that roar  
And thrust their hurried foam  
Up on the dusky shore.

Behind the western bars  
The shrouded day retreats,  
And unperceived the stars  
Steal to their sovran seats.

And whiter grows the foam,  
The small moon lightens more ;  
And as I turn me home,  
My shadow walks before.

### 5

LAST WEEK OF FEBRUARY, 1890

HARK to the merry birds, hark how they sing'  
Although 'tis not yet spring  
And keen the air ;  
Hale Winter, half resigning ere he go,  
Doth to his heiress shew  
His kingdom fair.

In patient russet is his forest spread,  
All bright with bramble red,  
With beechen moss  
And holly sheen : the oak silver and stark  
Sunneth his aged bark  
And wrinkled boss.

## *Shorter Poems*

But neath the ruin of the withered brake  
Primroses now awake  
From nursing shades :  
The crumpled carpet of the dry leaves brown  
Avails not to keep down  
The hyacinth blades.

The hazel hath put forth his tassels ruffed ;  
The willow's flossy tuft  
Hath slipped him free :  
The rose amid her ransacked orange hips  
Braggeth the tender tips  
Of bowers to be.

A black rook stirs the branches here and there,  
Foraging to repair  
His broken home :  
And hark, on the ash-boughs ! Never thrush did sing  
Louder in praise of spring,  
When spring is come.

## 6

APRIL, 1885

WANTON with long delay the gay spring leaping cometh ;  
The blackthorn starreth now his bough on the eve of May :  
All day in the sweet box-tree the bee for pleasure hummeth :  
The cuckoo sends afloat his note on the air all day.

Now dewy nights again and rain in gentle shower  
At root of tree and flower have quenched the winter's drouth :  
On high the hot sun smiles, and banks of cloud uptower  
In bulging heads that crowd for miles the dazzling south.

## *Book IV*

### 7

GÁY Róbin is seen no more :  
He is gone with the snow,  
For winter is o'er  
And Robin will go.  
In need he was fed, and now he is fled  
Away to his secret nest.  
No more will he stand  
Begging for crumbs,  
No longer he comes  
Beseeching our hand  
And showing his breast  
At window and door :—  
Gay Robin is seen no more.

Blithe Robin is heard no more :  
He gave us his song  
When summer was o'er  
And winter was long :  
He sang for his bread and now he is fled  
Away to his secret nest.  
And there in the green  
Early and late  
Alone to his mate  
He pipeth unseen  
And swelleth his breast ;  
For us it is o'er :—  
Blithe Robin is heard no more.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 8

SPRING goeth all in white,  
Crowned with milk-white may :  
In fleecy flocks of light  
O'er heaven the white clouds stray :

White butterflies in the air ;  
White daisies prank the ground :  
The cherry and hoary pear  
Scatter their snow around.

### 9

My eyes for beauty pine,  
My soul for Goddës grace :  
No other care nor hope is mine ;  
To heaven I turn my face.

One splendour thence is shed  
From all the stars above :  
'Tis namèd when God's name is said,  
'Tis Love, 'tis heavenly Love.

And every gentle heart,  
That burns with true desire,  
Is lit from eyes that mirror part  
Of that celestial fire.

### 10

O LOVE, my muse, how was 't for me  
Among the best to dare,  
In thy high courts that bowed the knee  
With sacrifice and prayer ?



## *Book IV*

Their mighty offerings at thy shrine  
Shamed me, who nothing bore  
Their suits were mockeries of mine,  
I sued for so much more.

Full many I met that crowned with bay  
In triumph home returned,  
And many a master on the way  
Proud of the prize I scorned.

I wished no garland on my head  
Nor treasure in my hand ;  
My gift the longing that me led,  
My prayer thy high command,

My love, my muse ; and when I spake  
Thou mad'st me thine that day,  
And more than hundred hearts could take  
Gav'st me to bear away.

### I I

Love on my heart from heaven fell,  
Soft as the dew on flowers of spring,  
Sweet as the hidden drops that swell  
Their honey-throated chaliceing.

Now never from him do I part,  
Hosanna evermore I cry :  
I taste his savour in my heart,  
And bid all praise him as do I.

Without him noughtsoever is,  
Nor was afore, nor e'er shall be :  
Nor any other joy than his  
Wish I for mine to comfort me.

## *Shorter Poems*

12

THE hill pines were sighing,  
O'ercast and chill was the day :  
A mist in the valley lying  
Blotted the pleasant May.

But deep in the glen's bosom  
Summer slept in the fire  
Of the odorous gorse-blossom  
And the hot scent of the brier.

A ribald cuckoo clamoured,  
And out of the copse the stroke  
Of the iron axe that hammered  
The iron heart of the oak.

Anon a sound appalling,  
As a hundred years of pride  
Crashed, in the silence falling :  
And the shadowy pine-trees sighed.

13

### THE WINDMILL

THE green corn waving in the dale,  
The ripe grass waving on the hill :  
I lean across the paddock pale  
And gaze upon the giddy mill.

Its hurtling sails a mighty sweep  
Cut thro' the air : with rushing sound  
Each strikes in fury down the steep,  
Rattles, and whirls in chase around.

## *Book IV*

Beside his sacks the miller stands  
On high within the open door :  
A book and pencil in his hands,  
His grist and meal he reckoneth o'er.

His tireless merry slave the wind  
Is busy with his work to-day :  
From whencesoe'er, he comes to grind ;  
He hath a will and knows the way.

He gives the creaking sails a spin,  
The circling millstones faster flee,  
The shuddering timbers groan within,  
And down the shoot the meal runs free.

The miller giveth him no thanks,  
And doth not much his work o'erlook :  
He stands beside the sacks, and ranks  
The figures in his dusty book.

### 14

WHEN June is come, then all the day  
I'll sit with my love in the scented hay :  
And watch the sunshot palaces high,  
That the white clouds build in the breezy sky.

She singeth, and I do make her a song,  
And read sweet poems the whole day long :  
Unseen as we lie in our haybuilt home.  
O life is delight when June is come.

### 15

THE pinks along my garden walks  
Have all shot forth their summer stalks,  
Thronging their buds 'mong tulips hot,  
And blue forget-me-not.

## *Shorter Poems*

Their dazzling snows forth-bursting soon  
Will lade the idle breath of June :  
And waken thro' the fragrant night  
To steal the pale moonlight.

The nightingale at end of May  
Lingers each year for their display ,  
Till when he sees their blossoms blown,  
He knows the spring is flown.

June's birth they greet, and when their bloom  
Dislustres, withering on his tomb,  
Then summer hath a shortening day ;  
And steps slow to decay.

### 16

FIRE of heaven, whose starry arrow  
Pierces the veil of timeless night :  
Molten spheres, whose tempests narrow  
Their floods to a beam of gentle light,  
To charm with a moon-ray quenched from fire  
The land of delight, the land of desire !

Smile of love, a flower planted,  
Sprung in the garden of joy that art :  
Eyes that shine with a glow enchanted,  
Whose spreading fires encircle my heart,  
And warm with a noon-ray drenched in fire  
My land of delight, my land of desire !

### 17

THE idle life I lead  
Is like a pleasant sleep,  
Wherein I rest and heed  
The dreams that by me sweep

## *Book IV*

And still of all my dreams  
In turn so swiftly past,  
Each in its fancy seems  
A nobler than the last.

And every eve I say,  
Noting my step in bliss,  
That I have known no day  
In all my life like this.

### 18

ANGEL spirits of sleep,  
White-robed, with silver hair,  
In your meadows fair,  
Where the willows weep,  
And the sad moonbeam  
On the gliding stream  
Writes her scattered dream :

Angel spirits of sleep,  
Dancing to the weir  
In the hollow roar  
Of its waters deep ;  
Know ye how men say  
That ye haunt no more  
Isle and grassy shore  
With your moonlit play ;  
That ye dance not here,  
White-robed spirits of sleep,  
All the summer night  
Threading dances light ?

## *Shorter Poems*

19

### ANNIVERSARY

WHAT is sweeter than new-mown hay,  
Fresher than winds o'er-sea that blow,  
Innocent above children's play,  
Fairer and purer than winter snow,  
Frolic as are the morns of May?  
—If it should be what best I know!

What is richer than thoughts that stray  
From reading of poems that smoothly flow?  
What is solemn like the delay  
Of concords linked in a music slow  
Dying thro' vaulted aisles away?  
—If it should be what best I know!

What gives faith to me when I pray,  
Setteth my heart with joy aglow,  
Filleth my song with fancies gay,  
Maketh the heaven to which I go,  
The gladness of earth that lasteth for aye?  
—If it should be what best I know!

But tell me thou—'twas on this day  
That first we loved five years ago—  
If 'tis a thing that I can say,  
Though it must be what best we know.

20

THE summer trees are tempest-torn,  
The hills are wrapped in a mantle wide  
Of folding rain by the mad wind borne  
Across the country side.

## *Book IV*

His scourge of fury is lashing down  
The delicate-rankèd golden corn,  
That never more shall rear its crown  
And curtsey to the morn.

There shews no care in heaven to save  
Man's pitiful patience, or provide  
A season for the season's slave,  
Whose trust hath toiled and died.

So my proud spirit in me is sad,  
A wreck of fairer fields to mourn,  
The ruin of golden hopes she had,  
My delicate-rankèd corn.

### 21

THE birds that sing on autumn eves  
Among the golden-tinted leaves,  
Are but the few that true remain  
Of budding May's rejoicing train.  
Like autumn flowers that brave the frost,  
And make their show when hope is lost,  
These 'mong the fruits and mellow scent  
Mourn not the high-sunned summer spent.  
Their notes thro' all the jocund spring  
Were mixed in merry musicking :  
They sang for love the whole day long,  
But now their love is all for song.  
Now each hath perfected his lay  
To praise the year that hastes away :  
They sit on boughs apart, and vie  
In single songs and rich reply :  
And oft as in the copse I hear  
These anthems of the dying year,  
The passions, once her peace that stole,  
With flattering love my heart console.

## *Shorter Poems*

22

WHEN my love was away,  
Full three days were not sped,  
I caught my fancy astray  
Thinking if she were dead,

And I alone, alone :  
It seemed in my misery  
In all the world was none  
Ever so lone as I.

I wept ; but it did not shame  
Nor comfort my heart : away  
I rode as I might, and came  
To my love at close of day.

The sight of her stilled my fears,  
My fairest-hearted love :  
And yet in her eyes were tears :  
Which when I questioned of,

O now thou art come, she cried,  
'Tis fled : but I thought to-day  
I never could here abide,  
If thou wert longer away.

23

THE storm is over, the land hushes to rest :  
The tyrannous wind, its strength fordone,  
Is fallen back in the west  
To couch with the sinking sun.  
The last clouds fare  
With fainting speed, and their thin streamers fly  
In melting drifts of the sky.  
Already the birds in the air



## Book IV

Appear again ; the rooks return to their haunt,  
And one by one,  
Proclaiming aloud their care,  
Renew their peaceful chant.

Torn and shattered the trees their branches again reset,  
They trim afresh the fair  
Few green and golden leaves withheld from the storm,  
And awhile will be handsome yet.  
To-morrow's sun shall caress  
Their remnant of loveliness :  
In quiet days for a time  
Sad Autumn lingering warm  
Shall humour their faded prime.

But ah ! the leaves of summer that lie on the ground !  
What havoc ! The laughing timbrels of June,  
That curtained the birds' cradles, and screened their song,  
That sheltered the cooing doves at noon,  
Of airy fans the delicate throng,—  
Torn and scattered around :  
Far out afield they lie,  
In the watery furrows die,  
In grassy pools of the flood they sink and drown,  
Green-golden, orange, vermilion, golden and brown,  
The high year's flaunting crown  
Shattered and trampled down.

The day is done : the tired land looks for night :  
She prays to the night to keep  
In peace her nerves of delight :  
While silver mist upstealeth silently,  
And the broad cloud-driving moon in the clear sky  
Lifts o'er the firs her shining shield,  
And in her tranquil light  
Sleep falls on forest and field.  
Sée ! sléep hath fallen : the trees are asleep :  
The night is come. The land is wrapt in sleep.

## *Shorter Poems*

24

YE thrilled me once, ye mournful strains,  
Ye anthems of plaintive woe,  
My spirit was sad when I was young ;  
Ah sorrowful long-ago !  
But since I have found the beauty of joy  
I have done with proud dismay :  
For howsoe'er man hug his care  
The best of his art is gay.

And yet if voices of fancy's choir  
Again in mine ear awake  
Your old lament, 'tis dear to me still,  
Nor all for memory's sake :  
'Tis like the dirge of sorrow dead,  
Whose tears are wiped away ;  
Or drops of the shower when rain is o'er,  
That jewel the brightened day.

25

SAY who is this with silvered hair,  
So pale and worn and thin,  
Who passeth here, and passeth there,  
And looketh out and in ?

That useth not our garb nor tongue  
And knoweth things untold :  
Who teacheth pleasure to the young,  
And wisdom to the old ?

No toil he maketh his by day,  
No home his own by night ;  
But wheresoe'er he take his way,  
He killeth our delight.

## *Book IV*

Since he is come there's nothing wise  
Nor fair in man or child,  
Unless his deep divining eyes  
Have looked on it and smiled.

Whence came he hither all alone  
Among our folk to spy?  
There's nought that we can call our own,  
Till he shall hap to die.

And I would dig his grave full deep  
Beneath the churchyard yew,  
Lest thence his wizard eyes might peep  
To mark the things we do.

### 26

CROWN Winter with green,  
And give him good drink  
To physic his spleen  
Or ever he think.

His mouth to the bowl,  
His feet to the fire;  
And let him, good soul,  
No comfort desire.

So merry he be,  
I bid him abide:  
And merry be we  
This good Yuletide.

## *Shorter Poems*

27

THE snow lies sprinkled on the beach,  
And whitens all the marshy lea :  
The sad gulls wail adown the gale,  
The day is dark and black the sea.  
Shorn of their crests the blighted waves  
With driven foam the offing fleck :  
The ebb is low and barely laves  
The red rust of the giant wreck.

On such a stony, breaking beach  
My childhood chanced and chose to be :  
'Twas here I played, and musing made  
My friend the melancholy sea.

He from his dim enchanted caves  
With shuddering roar and onrush wild  
Fell down in sacrificial waves  
At feet of his exulting child.

Unto a spirit too light for fear  
His wrath was mirth, his wail was glee :—  
My heart is now too fixed to bow  
Tho' all his tempests howl at me :

For to the gain life's summer saves,  
My solemn joy's increasing store,  
The tossing of his mournful waves  
Makes sweetest music evermore.

28

My spirit kisseth thine,  
My spirit embraceth thee :  
I feel thy being twine  
Her graces over me,

( 298 )

## *Book IV*

In the life-kindling fold  
Of God's breath ; where on high,  
In furthest space untold  
Like a lost world I lie :

And o'er my dreaming plains  
Lightens, most pale and fair,  
A moon that never wanes ;  
Or more, if I compare,

Like what the shepherd sees  
On late mid-winter dawns,  
When thro' the branchèd trees,  
O'er the white-frosted lawns,

The huge unclouded sun,  
Surprising the world whist,  
Is all uprisen thereon,  
Golden with melting mist.

### 29

ARIEL, O,—my angel, my own,—  
Whither away then art thou flown  
Beyond my spirit's dominion ?  
That makest my heart run over with rhyme,  
Renewing at will my youth for a time,  
My servant, my pretty minion.

Now indeed I have cause to mourn,  
Now thou returnest scorn for scorn :  
Leave me not to my folly :  
For when thou art with me is none so gay  
As I, and none when thou'rt away  
Was ever so melancholy.

## *Shorter Poems*

30

### LAUS DEO

LET praise devote thy work, and skill employ  
Thy whole mind, and thy heart be lost in joy.  
Well-doing bringeth pride, this constant thought  
Humility, that thy best done is nought.  
Man doeth nothing well, be it great or small,  
Save to praise God ; but that hath savèd all :  
For God requires no more than thou hast done,  
And takes thy work to bless it for his own.

## BOOK V

DEDICATED TO M. G. K.

### I

#### THE WINNOWNERS

BETWIXT two billows of the downs  
The little hamlet lies,  
And nothing sees but the bald crowns  
Of the hills, and the blue skies.

Clustering beneath the long descent  
And grey slopes of the wold,  
The red roofs nestle, oversprent  
With lichen yellow as gold.

We found it in the mid-day sun  
Basking, what time of year  
The thrush his singing has begun,  
Ere the first leaves appear.

High from his load a woodman pitched  
His faggots on the stack :  
Knee-deep in straw the cattle twitched  
Sweet hay from crib and rack :

And from the barn hard by was borne  
A steady muffled din,  
By which we knew that threshèd corn  
Was winnowing, and went in.

## *Shorter Poems*

The sunbeams on the motey air  
Streamed through the open door,  
And on the brown arms moving bare,  
And the grain upon the floor.

One turns the crank, one stoops to feed  
The hopper, lest it lack,  
One in the bushel scoops the seed,  
One stands to hold the sack.

We watched the good grain rattle down,  
And the awns fly in the draught;  
To see us both so pensive grown  
The honest labourers laughed :

Merry they were, because the wheat  
Was clean and plump and good,  
Pleasant to hand and eye, and meet  
For market and for food.

It chanced we from the city were,  
And had not gat us free  
In spirit from the store and stir  
Of its immensity :

But here we found ourselves again.  
Where humble harvests bring  
After much toil but little grain,  
'Tis merry winnowing.

### 2

## THE AFFLICTION OF RICHARD

LOVE not too much. But how,  
When thou hast made me such,  
And dost thy gifts bestow,  
How can I love too much ?



## *Book V*

Though I must fear to lose,  
And drown my joy in care,  
With all its thorns I choose  
The path of love and prayer.

Though thou, I know not why,  
Didst kill my childish trust,  
That breach with toil did I  
Repair, because I must :

And spite of frightening schemes,  
With which the fiends of Hell  
BlaspHEME thee in my dreams,  
So far I have hoped well.

But what the heavenly key,  
What marvel in me wrought  
Shall quite exculpate thee,  
I have no shadow of thought.

What am I that complain?  
The love, from which began  
My question sad and vain,  
Justifies thee to man.

### 3

SINCE to be loved endures,  
To love is wise :  
Earth hath no good but yours,  
Brave, joyful eyes :

Earth hath no sin but thine,  
Dull eye of scorn :  
O'er thee the sun doth pine  
And angels mourn.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 4

#### THE GARDEN IN SEPTEMBER

Now thin mists temper the slow-ripening beams  
Of the September sun : his golden gleams  
On gaudy flowers shine, that prank the rows  
Of high-grown hollyhocks, and all tall shows  
That Autumn flaunteth in his bushy bowers ;  
Where tomtits, hanging from the drooping heads  
Of giant sunflowers, peck the nutty seeds ;  
And in the feathery aster bees on wing  
Seize and set free the honied flowers,  
Till thousand stars leap with their visiting :  
While ever across the path mazily flit,  
Unpiloted in the sun,  
The dreamy butterflies  
With dazzling colours powdered and soft glooms,  
White, black and crimson stripes, and peacock eyes,  
Or on chance flowers sit,  
With idle effort plundering one by one  
The nectaries of deepest-throated blooms.

With gentle flaws the western breeze  
Into the garden saileth,  
Scarce here and there stirring the single trees,  
For his sharpness he vaileth :  
So long a comrade of the bearded corn,  
Now from the stubbles whence the shocks are borne,  
O'er dewy lawns he turns to stray,  
As mindful of the kisses and soft play  
Wherewith he enamoured the light-hearted May,  
Ere he deserted her ;  
Lover of fragrance, and too late repents ;  
Nor more of heavy hyacinth now may drink,  
Nor spicy pink,

## *Book V*

Nor summer's rose, nor garnered lavender,  
But the few lingering scents  
Of streakèd pea, and gillyflower, and stocks  
Of courtly purple, and aromatic phlox.

And at all times to hear are drowsy tones  
Of dizzy flies, and humming drones,  
With sudden flap of pigeon wings in the sky,  
Or the wild cry  
Of thirsty rooks, that scour ascare  
The distant blue, to watering as they fare  
With creaking pinions, or—on business bent,  
If aught their ancient polity displease,—  
Come gathering to their colony, and there  
Settling in ragged parliament,  
Some stormy council hold in the high trees.

### 5

So sweet love seemed that April morn,  
When first we kissed beside the thorn,  
So strangely sweet, it was not strange  
We thought that love could never change.

But I can tell—let truth be told—  
That love will change in growing old;  
Though day by day is nought to see,  
So delicate his motions be.

And in the end 'twill come to pass  
Quite to forget what once he was,  
Nor even in fancy to recall  
The pleasure that was all in all.

His little spring, that sweet we found,  
So deep in summer floods is drowned,  
I wonder, bathed in joy complete,  
How love so young could be so sweet.

## *Shorter Poems*

### 6

#### LARKS

WHAT voice of gladness, hark !  
In heaven is ringing ?  
From the sad fields the lark  
Is upward winging.

High through the mournful mist that blots our day  
Their songs betray them soaring in the grey.

See them ! Nay, they  
In sunlight swim ; above the furthest stain  
Of cloud attain ; their hearts in music rain  
Upon the plain.

Sweet birds, far out of sight  
Your songs of pleasure  
Dome us with joy as bright  
As heaven's best azure.

### 7

#### THE PALM WILLOW

SEE, whirling snow sprinkles the starvèd fields,  
The birds have stayed to sing ;  
No covert yet their fairy harbour yields.  
When cometh Spring ?  
Ah ! in their tiny throats what songs unborn  
Are quenched each morn.

The lenten lilies, through the frost that push,  
Their yellow heads withhold :  
The woodland willow stands a lonely bush  
Of nebulous gold ;  
There the Spring-goddess cowers in faint attire  
Of frightened fire.

# Book V

## 8

### ASIAN BIRDS

IN this May-month, by grace  
of heaven, things shoot apace.  
The waiting multitude  
of fair boughs in the wood,  
How few days have arrayed  
their beauty in green shade.

What have I seen or heard ?  
it was the yellow bird  
Sang in the tree : he flew  
a flame against the blue ;  
Upward he flashed. Again,  
hark ! 'tis his heavenly strain.

Another ! Hush ! Behold,  
many, like boats of gold,  
From waving branch to branch  
their airy bodies launch.  
What music is like this,  
where each note is a kiss ?

The golden willows lift  
their boughs the sun to sift :  
Their sprays they droop to screen  
the sky with veils of green,  
A floating cage of song,  
where feathered lovers throng.

How the delicious notes  
come bubbling from their throats !  
Full and sweet how they are shed  
like round pearls from a thread !  
The motions of their flight  
are wishes of delight.

## *Shorter Poems*

Hearing their song I trace  
the secret of their grace.  
Ah, could I this fair time  
so fashion into rhyme,  
'The poem that I sing  
would be the voice of spring.

### 9

## JANUARY

COLD is the winter day, misty and dark :  
The sunless sky with faded gleams is rent :  
And patches of thin snow outlying, mark  
The landscape with a drear disfigurement.

The trees their mournful branches lift aloft :  
The oak with knotty twigs is full of trust,  
With bud-thronged bough the cherry in the croft ;  
The chestnut holds her gluey knops upthrust.

No birds sing, but the starling chaps his bill  
And chatters mockingly ; the newborn lambs  
Within their strawbuilt fold beneath the hill  
Answer with plaintive cry their bleating dams.

Their voices melt in welcome dreams of spring,  
Green grass and leafy trees and sunny skies :  
My fancy decks the woods, the thrushes sing,  
Meadows are gay, bees hum and scents arise.

And God the Maker doth my heart grow bold  
To praise for wintry works not understood,  
Who all the worlds and ages doth behold,  
Evil and good as one, and all as good.

## Book V

IO

### A ROBIN

FLAME-THROATED robin on the topmost bough

Of the leafless oak, what singest thou?

Hark ! he telleth how—

‘Spring is coming now ; Spring is coming now.

Now ruddy are the elm-tops against the blue sky,

The pale larch donneth her jewelry ;

Red fir and black fir sigh,

And I am lamenting the year gone by.

The bushes where I nested are all cut down,

They are felling the tall trees one by one,

And my mate is dead and gone,

In the winter she died and left me lone.

She lay in the thicket where I fear to go ;

For when the March-winds after the snow

The leaves away did blow,

She was not there, and my heart is woe :

And sad is my song, when I begin to sing,

As I sit in the sunshine this merry spring :

Like a withered leaf I cling

To the white oak-bough, while the wood doth ring.

Spring is coming now, the sun again is gay ;

Each day like a last spring’s happy day.’—

Thus sang he ; then from his spray

He saw me listening and flew away.

II

I NEVER shall love the snow again

Since Maurice died :

With corniced drift it blocked the lane

And sheeted in a desolate plain

The country side.

## *Shorter Poems*

The trees with silvery rime bedight  
    Their branches bare.  
By day no sun appeared ; by night  
The hidden moon shed thievish light  
    In the misty air.

We fed the birds that flew around  
    In flocks to be fed :  
No shelter in holly or brake they found.  
The speckled thrush on the frozen ground  
    Lay frozen and dead.

We skated on stream and pond ; we cut  
    The crinching snow  
To Doric temple or Arctic hut ;  
We laughed and sang at nightfall, shut  
    By the fireside glow.

Yet grudged we our keen delights before  
    Maurice should come.  
We said, In-door or out-of-door  
We shall love life for a month or more,  
    When he is home.

They brought him home ; 'twas two days late  
    For Christmas day :  
Wrapped in white, in solemn state,  
A flower in his hand, all still and straight  
    Our Maurice lay.

And two days ere the year outgave  
    We laid him low.  
The best of us truly were not brave,  
When we laid Maurice down in his grave  
    Under the snow.



# Book V

12

## NIGHTINGALES

BEAUTIFUL must be the mountains whence ye come,  
And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams, wherefrom  
Ye learn your song :

Where are those starry woods ? O might I wander there,  
Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air  
Bloom the year long !

Nay, barren are those mountains and spent the streams :  
Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts our dreams,  
A throe of the heart,  
Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes profound,  
No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound,  
For all our art.

Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men  
We pour our dark nocturnal secret ; and then,  
As night is withdrawn  
From these sweet-springing meads and bursting boughs of  
May,  
Dream, while the innumerable choir of day  
Welcome the dawn.

13

A SONG of my heart, as the sun peered o'er the sea,  
Was born at morning to me :  
And out of my treasure-house it chose  
A melody, that arose

Of all fair sounds that I love, remembered together  
In one ; and I knew not whether  
From waves of rustling wheat it was,  
Recoveringly that pass :

## *Shorter Poems*

Or a hum of bees in the queenly robes of the lime :  
    Or a descant in pairing time  
Of warbling birds : or watery bells  
    Of rivulets in the hills :

Or whether on blazing downs a high lark's hymn  
    Alone in the azure dim :  
Or a sough of pines, when the midnight wold  
    Is solitary and cold :

Or a lapping river-ripple all day chiding  
    The bow of my wherry gliding  
Down Thames, between his flowery shores  
    Re-echoing to the oars :

Or anthem notes, wherever in archèd quires  
    The unheeded music twines,  
And, centuries by, to the stony shade  
    Flies following and to fade :

Or a homely prattle of children's voices gay  
    'Mong garden joys at play :  
Or a sundown chaunting of solemn rooks :  
    Or memory of my books,

Which hold the words that poets in many a tongue  
    To the irksome world have sung :  
Or the voice, my happy lover, of thee  
    Now separated from me.

A ruby of fire in the burning sleep of my brain  
    Long hid my thought had lain,  
Forgotten dreams of a thousand days  
    Ingathering to its rays,

The light of life in darkness tempering long ;  
    Till now a perfect song,  
A jewel of jewels it leapt above  
    To the coronal of my love.

FOUNDER'S DAY. A SECULAR ODE  
ON THE NINTH JUBILEE OF  
ETON COLLEGE

CHRIST and his Mother, heavenly maid,  
Mary, in whose fair name was laid  
Eton's corner, bless our youth  
With truth, and purity, mother of truth !

O ye, 'neath breezy skies of June,  
By silver Thames's lulling tune,  
In shade of willow or oak, who try  
The golden gates of poesy ;

Or on the tabled sward all day  
Match your strength in England's play,  
Scholars of Henry, giving grace  
To toil and force in game or race ;

Exceed the prayer and keep the fame  
Of him, the sorrowful king, who came  
Here in his realm a realm to found,  
Where he might stand for ever crowned.

Or whether with naked bodies flashing  
Ye plunge in the lashing weir ; or dashing  
The oars of cedar skiffs, ye strain  
Round the rushes and home again ;—

Or what pursuit soe'er it be  
That makes your mingled presence free,  
When by the schoolgate 'neath the limes  
Ye muster waiting the lazy chimes ;

## *Shorter Poems*

May Peace, that conquereth sin and death,  
Temper for you her sword of faith ;  
Crown with honour the loving eyes,  
And touch with mirth the mouth of the wise.

Here is eternal spring : for you  
The very stars of heaven are new ;  
And aged Fame again is born,  
Fresh as a peeping flower of morn.

For you shall Shakespeare's scene unroll,  
Mozart shall steal your ravished soul,  
Homer his bardic hymn rehearse,  
Virgil recite his maiden verse.

Now learn, love, have, do, be the best ;  
Each in one thing excel the rest :  
Strive ; and hold fast this truth of heaven—  
To him that hath shall more be given.

Slow on your dial the shadows creep,  
So many hours for food and sleep,  
So many hours till study tire,  
So many hours for heart's desire.

These suns and moons shall memory save,  
Mirrors bright for her magic cave ;  
Wherein may steadfast eyes behold  
A self that groweth never old.

O in such prime enjoy your lot,  
And when ye leave regret it not ;  
With wishing gifts in festal state  
Pass ye the angel-sworded gate.

## Book V

Then to the world let shine your light,  
Children in play be lions in fight,  
And match with red immortal deeds  
The victory that made ring the meads :

Or by firm wisdom save your land  
From giddy head and grasping hand :  
IMPROVE THE BEST ; so shall your sons  
Better what ye have bettered once.

Send them here to the court of grace  
Bearing your name to fill your place :  
Ye in their time shall live again  
The happy dream of Henry's reign :

And on his day your steps be bent  
Where, saint and king, crowned with content,  
He biddeth a prayer to bless his youth  
With truth, and purity, mother of truth.

### 15

THE north wind came up yesternight  
With the new year's full moon,  
And rising as she gained her height,  
Grew to a tempest soon.  
Yet found he not on heaven's face  
A task of cloud to clear ;  
There was no speck that he might chase  
Off the blue hemisphere,  
Nor vapour from the land to drive :  
The frost-bound country held  
Nought motionable or alive,  
That 'gainst his wrath rebelled.  
There scarce was hanging in the wood  
A shrivelled leaf to reave ;

## *Shorter Poems*

No bud had burst its swathing hood  
That he could rend or grieve :  
Only the tall tree-skeletons,  
Where they were shadowed all,  
Wavered a little on the stones,  
And on the white church-wall.

—Like as an artist in his mood,  
Who reckons all as nought,  
So he may quickly paint his nude,  
Unutterable thought :  
So Nature in a frenzied hour  
By day or night will show  
Dim indications of the power  
That doometh man to woe.  
Ah, many have my visions been,  
And some I know full well :  
I would that all that I have seen  
Were fit for speech to tell.—

And by the churchyard as I came,  
It seemed my spirit passed  
Into a land that hath no name,  
Grey, melancholy and vast ;  
Where nothing comes : but Memory,  
The widowed queen of Death,  
Reigns, and with fixed, sepulchral eye  
All slumber banisheth.  
Each grain of writhen dust, that drapes  
That sickly, staring shore,  
Its old chaotic change of shapes  
Remembers evermore.  
And ghosts of cities long decayed  
And ruined shrines of Fate  
Gather the paths, that Time hath made  
Foolish and desolate.

## Book V

Nor winter there hath hope of spring,  
Nor the pale night of day,  
Since the old king with scorpion sting  
Hath done himself away.

\* \*

The morn was calm ; the wind's last breath  
Had fal'n : in solemn hush  
The golden moon went down beneath  
The dawning's crimson flush.

### 16

#### NORTH WIND IN OCTOBER

IN the golden glade the chestnuts are fallen all ;  
From the sered boughs of the oak the acorns fall :  
The beech scatters her ruddy fire ;  
The lime hath stripped to the cold,  
And standeth naked above her yellow attire :  
The larch thinneth her spire  
To lay the ways of the wood with cloth of gold.

Out of the golden-green and white  
Of the brake the fir-trees stand upright  
In the forest of flame, and wave aloft  
To the blue of heaven their blue-green tuftings soft.

But swiftly in shuddering gloom the splendours fail,  
As the harrying North-wind beareth  
A cloud of skirmishing hail  
The grievèd woodland to smite :  
In a hurricane through the trees he teareth,  
Raking the boughs and the leaves rending,  
And whistleth to the descending  
Blows of his icy flail.  
Gold and snow he mixeth in spite,  
And whirlleth afar ; as away on his winnowing flight  
He passeth, and all again for awhile is bright.

## *Shorter Poems*

17

### FIRST SPRING MORNING

A CHILD'S POEM.

Look ! Look ! the spring is come :  
O feel the gentle air,  
That wanders thro' the boughs to burst  
The thick buds everywhere !  
The birds are glad to see  
The high unclouded sun :  
Winter is fled away, they sing,  
The gay time is begun.

Adown the meadows green  
Let us go dance and play,  
And look for violets in the lane,  
And ramble far away  
To gather primroses,  
That in the woodland grow,  
And hunt for oxlips, or if yet  
The blades of bluebells show :

There the old woodman gruff  
Hath half the coppice cut,  
And weaves the hurdles all day long  
Beside his willow hut.  
We'll steal on him, and then  
Startle him, all with glee  
Singing our song of winter fled  
And summer soon to be.



## Book V

18

### A VILLAGER

THERE was no lad handsomer than Willie was  
The day that he came to father's house :  
There was none had an eye as soft an' blue  
As Willie's was, when he came to woo.

To a labouring life though bound thee be,  
An' I on my father's ground live free,  
I'll take thee, I said, for thy manly grace,  
Thy gentle voice an' thy loving face.

'Tis forty years now since we were wed :  
We are ailing an' grey needs not to be said :  
But Willie's eye is as blue an' soft  
As the day when he wooed me in father's croft.

Yet changed am I in body an' mind,  
For Willie to me has ne'er been kind :  
Merrily drinking an' singing with the men  
He 'ud come home late six nights o' the se'n.

An' since the children be grown an' gone  
He 'as shunned the house an' left me lone :  
An' less an' less he brings me in  
Of the little he now has strength to win.

The roof lets through the wind an' the wet,  
An' master won't mend it with us in 's debt :  
An' all looks every day more worn,  
An' the best of my gowns be shabby an' torn.

No wonder if words hav' a-grown to blows ;  
That matters not while nobody knows :  
For love him I shall to the end of life,  
An' be, as I swore, his own true wife.

## *Shorter Poems*

An' when I am gone, he'll turn, an' see  
His folly an' wrong, an' be sorry for me :  
An' come to me there in the land o' bliss  
To give me the love I looked for in this.

### 19

WEEP not to-day : why should this sadness be ?  
Learn in present fears  
To o'ermaster those tears  
That unhindered conquer thee.

Think on thy past valour, thy future praise :  
Up, sad heart, nor faint  
In ungracious complaint,  
Or a prayer for better days.

Daily thy life shortens, the grave's dark peace  
Draweth surely nigh,  
When good-night is good-bye ;  
For the sleeping shall not cease.

Fight, to be found fighting : nor far away  
Deem, nor strange thy doom.  
Like this sorrow 'twill come,  
And the day will be to-day.

# NEW POEMS



*PREVIOUS EDITION*

*Collected for the first time in 1899. Smith, Elder & Co. Vol. II.  
See notes at end of that volume.*

# NEW POEMS

## ECLOGUE I

### THE MONTHS

#### *BASIL AND EDWARD*

MAN hath with man on earth no holier bond  
Than that the Muse weaves with her dreamy thread :  
Nor e'er was such transcendent love more fond  
Than that which Edward unto Basil led,  
Wandering alone across the woody shires  
To hear the living voice of that wide heart,  
To see the eyes that read the world's desires,  
And touch the hand that wrote the roving rhyme.  
Diverse their lots as distant were their homes,  
And since that early meeting, jealous Time  
Knitting their loves had held their lives apart.

But now again were these fine lovers met  
And sat together on a rocky hill  
Looking upon the vales of Somerset,  
Where the far sea gleam'd o'er the bosky combes,  
Satisfying their spirits the livelong day  
With various mirth and revelation due  
And delicate intimacy of delight,  
As there in happy indolence they lay  
And drank the sun, while round the breezy height  
Beneath their feet rabbit and listless ewe  
Nibbled the scented herb and grass at will.

## *New Poems*

Much talked they at their ease ; and at the last  
Spoke Edward thus, ' 'Twas on this very hill  
This time of the year,—but now twelve years are past,—  
That you provoked in verse my younger skill  
To praise the months against your rival song ;  
And ere the sun had westered ten degrees  
Our rhyme had brought him thro' the Zodiac.  
Have you remembered ? '—Basil answer'd back,  
' Guest of my solace, how could I forget ?  
Years fly as months that seem'd in youth so long.  
The precious life that, like indifferent gold,  
Is disregarded in its worth to hold  
Some jewel of love that God therein would set,  
It passeth and is gone.'—' And yet not all,'  
Edward replied : ' The passion as I please  
Of that past day I can to-day recall ;  
And if but you, as I, remember yet  
Your part thereof, and will again rehearse,  
For half an hour we may old Time outwit.'  
And Basil said, ' Alas for my poor verse !  
What happy memory of it still endures  
Will thank your love : I have forgotten it.  
Speak you my stanzas, I will ransom yours.  
Begin you then as I that day began,  
And I will follow as your answers ran.'

### JANUARY

ED. The moon that mounts the sun's deserted way,  
Turns the long winter night to a silver day ;  
But setteth golden in face of the solemn sight  
Of her lord arising upon a world of white.

### FEBRUARY

BA. I have in my heart a vision of spring begun  
In a sheltering wood, that feels the kiss of the sun :  
And a thrush adareth the melting day that dies  
In clouds of purple afloat upon saffron skies.

# *New Poems*

## MARCH

ED. Now carol the birds at dawn, and some new lay  
Announceth a homecome voyager every day.  
Beneath the tufted sallows the streamlet thrills  
With the leaping trout and the gleam of the daffodils.

## APRIL

BA. Then laugheth the year ; with flowers the meads are  
bright ;  
The bursting branches are tipped with flames of light :  
The landscape is light ; the dark clouds flee above,  
And the shades of the land are a blue that is deep as love.

## MAY

ED. But if you have seen a village all red and old  
In cherry-orchards a-sprinkle with white and gold,  
By a hawthorn seated, or a witch-elm flowering high,  
A gay breeze making riot in the waving rye !

## JUNE

BA. Then night retires from heaven ; the high winds go  
A-sailing in cloud-pavilions of cavern'd snow.  
O June, sweet Philomel sang thy cradle-lay ;  
In rosy revel thy spirit shall pass away.

## JULY

ED. Heavy is the green of the fields, heavy the trees  
With foliage hang, drowsy the hum of bees  
In the thund'rous air : the crowded scents lie low :  
Thro' tangle of weeds the river runneth slow.

## AUGUST

BA. A reaper with dusty shoon and hat of straw  
On the yellow field, his scythe in his arm's braw :  
Beneath the tall grey trees resting at noon  
From sweat and swink with scythe and dusty shoon.

# New Poems

## SEPTEMBER

ED. Earth's flaunting flower of passion fadeth fair  
To ripening fruit in sunlit veils of the air,  
As the art of man makes wisdom to glorify  
The beauty and love of life born else to die.

## OCTOBER

BA. On frosty morns with the woods aflame, down, down  
The golden spoils fall thick from the chestnut crown.  
May Autumn in tranquil glory her riches spend,  
With mellow apples her orchard-branches bend.

## NOVEMBER

ED. Sad mists have hid the sun, the land is forlorn :  
The plough is afield, the hunter windeth his horn.  
Dame Prudence looketh well to her winter stores,  
And many a wise man finds his pleasure indoors.

## DECEMBER

BA. I pray thee don thy jerkin of olden time,  
Bring us good ice, and silver the trees with rime ;  
And I will good cheer, good music and wine bestow,  
When the Christmas guest comes galloping over the snow.

Thus they in verse alternate sang the year  
For rabbit shy and listless ewe to hear,  
Among the grey rocks on the mountain green  
Beneath the sky in fair and pastoral scene,  
Like those Sicilian swains, whose doric tongue  
After two thousand years is ever young,—  
*Sweet the pine's murmur, and, shepherd, sweet thy pipe,—*  
Or that which gentle Virgil, yet unripe,  
Of Tityrus sang under the spreading beech  
And gave to rustic clowns immortal speech,  
By rocky fountain or on flowery mead



## *New Poems*

Bidding their idle flocks at will to feed,  
While they, retreated to some bosky glade,  
Together told their loves, and as they played  
Sang what sweet thing soe'er the poet feigned :

But these were men when good Victoria reigned,  
Poets themselves, who without shepherd gear  
Each of his native fancy sang the year.

### ECLOGUE II

GIOVANNI DUPRÈ

*LAWRENCE AND RICHARD*

LAWRENCE

Look down the river—against the western sky—  
The Ponte Santa Trinità—what throng  
Slowly trails o'er with waving banners high,  
With foot and horse ! Surely they bear along  
The spoil of one whom Florence honoureth :  
And hark ! the drum, the trumpeting dismay,  
The wail of the triumphal march of death.

RICHARD

'Twill be the funeral of Giovánn Duprè  
Wending to Santa Croce. Let us go  
And see what relic of old splendour cheers  
The dying ritual.

LAWRENCE

They esteem him well  
To lay his bones with Michael Angelo.  
Who might he be ?

RICHARD

He too a sculptor, one  
Who left a work long to resist the years.

LAWRENCE

You make me question further.

# *New Poems*

RICHARD

I can tell

All as we walk. A poor woodcarver's son,  
Prenticed to cut his father's rude designs  
(We have it from himself), maker of shrines,  
In his mean workshop in Siena dreamed ;  
And saw as gods the artists of the earth,  
And long'd to stand on their immortal shore,  
And be as they, who in his vision gleam'd,  
Dowering the world with grace for evermore.  
So, taxing rest and leisure to one aim,  
The boy of single will and inbred skill  
Rose step by step to academic fame.

LAWRENCE

Do I not know him then? His figures fill  
The tympana o'er Santa Croce's gate ;  
In the museum too, his Cain, that stands  
A left-handed discobolos . . . . .

RICHARD

So great

His vogue, that elder art of classic worth  
Went to the wall to give his statues room ;  
And last—his country's praise could do no more—  
He cut the stone that honoured good Cavour.

LAWRENCE

I have seen the things.

RICHARD

He, finding in his hands

His life-desire possest, fell not in gloom,  
Nor froth'd in vanity : his Sabbath earn'd  
He look'd to spend in meditative rest :  
So laying chisel by, he took a pen  
To tell his story to his countrymen,  
And prove (he did it) that the flower of all,  
Rarest to attain, is in the power of all.

## *New Poems*

LAWRENCE

Yet nought he ever made, that I have learn'd,  
In wood or stone deserved, nay not his best,  
The Greek or Tuscan name for beautiful.  
'Twas level with its praise, had force to pull  
Favour from fashion.

RICHARD

Yet he made one thing  
Worthy of the lily city in her spring ;  
For while in vain the forms of beauty he aped,  
A perfect spirit in himself he shaped ;  
And all his lifetime doing less than well  
Where he profess'd nor doubted to excel,  
Now, where he had no scholarship, but drew  
His art from love, 'twas better than he knew :  
And when he sat to write, lo ! by him stood  
The heavenly Muse, who smiles on all things good ;  
And for his truth's sake, for his stainless mind,  
His homely love and faith, she now grew kind,  
And changed the crown, that from the folk he got,  
For her green laurel, and he knew it not.

LAWRENCE

Ah ! Love of Beauty ! This man then mistook  
Ambition for her ?

RICHARD

In simplicity  
Erring he kept his truth ; and in his book  
The statue of his grace is fair to see.

LAWRENCE

Then buried with their great he well may be.

RICHARD

And number'd with the saints, not among them  
Who painted saints. Join we his requiem.

# *New Poems*

## ECLOGUE III

### FOURTH OF JUNE AT ETON

#### *RICHARD AND GODFREY*

RICHARD

BENEATH the wattled bank the eddies swarm  
In wandering dimples o'er the shady pool :  
The same their chase as when I was at school ;  
The same the music, where in shallows warm  
The current, sunder'd by the bushy isles,  
Returns to join the main, and struggles free  
Above the willows, gurgling thro' the piles :  
Nothing is changed, and yet how changed are we !  
—What can bring Godfrey to the Muses' bower ?

GODFREY

What but brings you ? The festal day of the year ;  
To live in boyish memories for an hour ;  
See and be seen : tho' you come seldom here.

RICHARD

Dread of the pang it was, fear to behold  
What once was all myself, that kept me away.

GODFREY

You miss new pleasures coveting the old.

RICHARD

They need have prudence, who in courage lack ;  
'Twas that I might go on I looked not back.

GODFREY

Of all our company he, who, we say,  
Fruited the laughing flower of liberty !

## *New Poems*

RICHARD

Ah ! had I my desire, so should it be.

GODFREY

Nay, but I know this melancholy mood ;  
'Twas your poetic fancy when a boy.

RICHARD

For Fancy cannot live on real food :  
In youth she will despise familiar joy  
To dwell in mournful shades ; as they grow real,  
Then buildeth she of joy her far ideal.

GODFREY

And so perverteth all. This stream to me  
Sings, and in sunny ripples lingeringly  
The water saith ' Ah me ! where have I leapt ?  
Into what garden of life ? what banks are these,  
What secret lawns, what ancient towers and trees ?  
Where the young sons of heav'n, with shouts of play  
Or low delighted speech, welcome the day,  
As if the poetry of the earth had slept  
To wake in ecstasy. O stay me ! alas !  
Stay me, ye happy isles, ere that I pass  
Without a memory on my sullen course  
By the black city to the tossing seas !'

RICHARD

So might this old oak say ' My heart is sere ;  
With greater effort every year I force  
My stubborn leafage : soon my branch will crack,  
And I shall fall or perish in the wrack :  
And here another tree its crown will rear,  
And see for centuries the boys at play :  
And 'neath its boughs, on some fine holiday,  
Old men shall prate as these.' Come see the game.

# New Poems

GODFREY

Yes, if you will. 'Tis all one picture fair.

RICHARD

Made in a mirror, and who looketh there  
Must see himself. Is not a dream the same?

GODFREY

*Life is a dream.*

RICHARD

And you, who say it, seem  
Dreaming to speak to a phantom in a dream.

## 4

### ELEGY

THE SUMMER-HOUSE ON THE MOUND

How well my eyes remember the dim path !  
My homing heart no happier playground hath.  
I need not close my lids but it appears  
Through the bewilderment of forty years  
To tempt my feet, my childish feet, between  
Its leafy walls, beneath its arching green ;  
Fairer than dream of sleep, than Hope more fair  
Leading to dreamless sleep her sister Care.

There grew two fellow limes, two rising trees,  
Shadowing the lawn, the summer haunt of bees,  
Whose stems, engraved with many a russet scar  
From the spear-hurlings of our mimic war,  
Pillar'd the portico to that wide walk,  
A mossy terrace of the native chalk  
Fashion'd, that led thro' the dark shades around  
Straight to the wooden temple on the mound.  
There live the memories of my early days,  
There still with childish heart my spirit plays ;

## *New Poems*

Yea, terror-stricken by the fiend despair  
When she hath fled me, I have found her there ;  
And there 'tis ever noon, and glad suns bring  
Alternate days of summer and of spring,  
With childish thought, and childish faces bright,  
And all unknown save but the hour's delight.

High on the mound the ivied arbour stood,  
A dome of straw upheld on rustic wood :  
Hidden in fern the steps of the ascent,  
Whereby unto the southern front we went,  
And from the dark plantation climbing free,  
Over a valley look'd out on the sea.

That sea is ever bright and blue, the sky  
Serene and blue, and ever white ships lie  
High on the horizon steadfast in full sail,  
Or nearer in the roads pass within hail,  
Of naked brigs and barques that windbound ride  
At their taut cables heading to the tide.

There many an hour I have sat to watch ; nay, now  
The brazen disk is cold against my brow,  
And in my sight a circle of the sea  
Enlarged to swiftness, where the salt waves flee,  
And ships in stately motion pass so near  
That what I see is speaking to my ear :  
I hear the waves dash and the tackle strain,  
The canvas flap, the rattle of the chain  
That runs out thro' the hawse, the clank of the winch  
Winding the rusty cable inch by inch,  
Till half I wonder if they have no care,  
Those sailors, that my glass is brought to bear  
On all their doings, if I vex them not  
On every petty task of their rough lot  
Prying and spying, searching every craft  
From painted truck to gunnel, fore and aft,—

## New Poems

Thro' idle Sundays as I have watch'd them lean  
Long hours upon the rail, or neath its screen  
Prone on the deck to lie outstretch'd at length,  
Sunk in renewal of their wearied strength.

But what a feast of joy to me, if some  
Fast-sailing frigate to the Channel come  
Back'd here her topsail, or brought gently up  
Let from her bow the splashing anchor drop,  
By faint contrary wind stay'd in her cruise,  
The *Phaethon* or dancing *Arethuse*,  
Or some immense three-decker of the line,  
Romantic as the tale of Troy divine ;  
Ere yet our iron age had doom'd to fall  
The towering freeboard of the wooden wall,  
And for the engines of a mightier Mars  
Clipp'd their wide wings, and dock'd their soaring spars.  
The gale that in their tackle sang, the wave  
That neath their gilded galleries dasht so brave  
Lost then their merriment, nor look to play  
With the heavy-hearted monsters of to-day.

One noon in March upon that anchoring ground  
Came Napier's fleet unto the Baltic bound :  
Cloudless the sky and calm and blue the sea,  
As round Saint Margaret's cliff mysteriously,  
Those murderous queens walking in Sabbath sleep  
Glided in line upon the windless deep :  
For in those days was first seen low and black  
Beside the full-rigg'd mast the strange smoke-stack,  
And neath their stern revol'd the twisted fan.  
Many I knew as soon as I might scan,  
The heavy *Royal George*, the *Acre* bright,  
The *Hogue* and *Ajax*, and could name aright  
Others that I remember now no more ;  
But chief, her blue flag flying at the fore,



## *New Poems*

With fighting guns a hundred thirty and one,  
The Admiral ship *The Duke of Wellington*,  
Whereon sail'd George, who in her gig had flown  
The silken ensign by our sisters sewn.  
The iron Duke himself,—whose soldier fame  
To England's proudest ship had given her name,  
And whose white hairs in this my earliest scene  
Had scarce more honour'd than accusom'd been,—  
Was two years since to his last haven past :  
I had seen his castle-flag to fall half-mast  
One morn as I sat looking on the sea,  
When thus all England's grief came first to me,  
Who hold my childhood favour'd that I knew  
So well the face that won at Waterloo.

But now 'tis other wars, and other men ;—  
The year that Napier sail'd, my years were ten—  
Yea, and new homes and loves my heart hath found :  
A priest has there usurped the ivied mound,  
The bell that call'd to horse calls now to prayers,  
And silent nuns tread the familiar stairs.  
Within the peach-clad walls that old outlaw,  
The Roman wolf, scratches with privy paw.

### 5

O LOVE, I complain,  
Complain of thee often,  
Because thou dost soften  
My being to pain :

Thou makest me fear  
The mind that createth,  
That loves not nor hateth  
In justice austere ;

## *New Poems*

Who, ere he make one,  
With millions togeth,  
And lightly destroyeth  
Whate'er is begun.

An' wer't not for thee,  
My glorious passion,  
My heart I could fashion  
To sternness, as he.

But thee, Love, he made  
Lest man should defy him,  
Connive and outvie him,  
And not be afraid :

Nay, thee, Love, he gave  
His terrors to cover,  
And turn to a lover  
His insolent slave.

### 6

## THE SOUTH WIND

THE south wind rose at dusk of the winter day,  
The warm breath of the western sea  
Circling wrapp'd the isle with his cloke of cloud,  
And it now reach'd even to me, at dusk of the day,  
And moan'd in the branches aloud :  
While here and there, in patches of dark space,  
A star shone forth from its heavenly place,  
As a spark that is borne in the smoky chase ;  
And, looking up, there fell on my face—  
Could it be drops of rain  
Soft as the wind, that fell on my face ?  
Gossamers light as threads of the summer dawn,

## *New Poems*

Suck'd by the sun from midmost calms of the main,  
From groves of coral islands secretly drawn,  
O'er half the round of earth to be driven,  
Now to fall on my face  
In silky skeins spun from the mists of heaven.

Who art thou, in wind and darkness and soft rain  
Thyself that robest, that bendest in sighing pines  
To whisper thy truth? that usest for signs  
A hurried glimpse of the moon, the glance of a star  
In the rifted sky?  
Who art thou, that with thee I  
Woo and am wooed?  
That robing thyself in darkness and soft rain  
Chooseth my chosen solitude,  
Coming so far  
To tell thy secret again,  
As a mother her child, in her folding arm  
Of a winter night by a flickering fire,  
Telleth the same tale o'er and o'er  
With gentle voice, and I never tire,  
So imperceptibly changeth the charm,  
As Love on buried ecstasy buildeth his tower,  
—Like as the stem that beareth the flower  
By trembling is knit to power;—  
Ah! long ago  
In thy first rapture I renounced my lot,  
The vanity, the despondency and the woe,  
And seeking thee to know  
Well was 't for me, and evermore  
I am thine, I know not what.

For me thou seekest ever, me wondering a day  
In the eternal alternations, me  
Free for a stolen moment of chance  
To dream a beautiful dream

## *New Poems*

In the everlasting dance  
Of speechless worlds, the unsearchable scheme,  
To me thou findest the way,  
Me and whomsoe'er  
I have found my dream to share  
Still with thy charm encircling ; even to-night  
To me and my love in darkness and soft rain  
Under the sighing pines thou comest again,  
And staying our speech with mystery of delight,  
Of the kiss that I give a wonder thou makest,  
And the kiss that I take thou takest.

### 7

I CLIMB the mossy bank of the glade :  
My love awaiteth me in the shade.

She holdeth a book that she never heedeth :  
In Goddës work her spirit readeth.

She is all to me, and I to her :  
When we embrace, the stars confer.

O my love, from beyond the sky  
I am calling thy heart, and who but I ?

Fresh as love is the breeze of June,  
In the dappled shade of the summer noon.

Catullus, throwing his heart away,  
Gave fewer kisses every day.

Heracleitus, spending his youth  
In search of wisdom, had less of truth.

Flame of fire was the poet's desire :  
The thinker found that life was fire.

O my love ! my song is done :  
My kiss hath both their fires in one.

## *New Poems*

### 8

To my love I whisper, and say  
Knowest thou why I love thee?—Nay:  
Nay, she saith; O tell me again.—

When in her ear the secret I tell,  
She smileth with joy incredible—

Ha! she is vain—O nay—  
Then tell us!—Nay, O nay.

But this is in my heart,  
That Love is Nature's perfect art,  
And man hath got his fancy hence,  
To clothe his thought in forms of sense.

Fair are thy works, O man, and fair  
Thy dreams of soul in garments rare,  
Beautiful past compare,  
Yea, godlike when thou hast the skill  
To steal a stir of the heavenly thrill:

But O, have care, have care!  
'Tis envious even to dare:  
And many a fiend is watching well  
To flush thy reed with the fire of hell.

### 9

My delight and thy delight  
Walking, like two angels white,  
In the gardens of the night:

My desire and thy desire  
Twining to a tongue of fire,  
Leaping live, and laughing higher;

## *New Poems*

Thro' the everlasting strife  
In the mystery of life.

Love, from whom the world begun,  
Hath the secret of the sun.

Love can tell, and love alone,  
Whence the million stars were strewn,  
Why each atom knows its own,  
How, in spite of woe and death,  
Gay is life, and sweet is breath :

This he taught us, this we knew,  
Happy in his science true,  
Hand in hand as we stood  
Neath the shadows of the wood,  
Heart to heart as we lay  
In the dawning of the day.

### IO

## SEPTUAGESIMA

Now all the windows with frost are blinded,  
As punctual day with greedy smile  
Lifts like a Cyclops evil-minded  
His ruddy eyeball over the isle.

In an hour 'tis paled, in an hour ascended  
A dazzling light in the cloudless grey.  
Steel is the ice ; the snow unblended  
Is trod to dust on the white highway.

The lambkins frisk ; the shepherd is melting  
Drink for the ewes with a fire of straw :  
The red flames leap at the wild air pelting  
Bitterly thro' the leafless shaw.

## *New Poems*

Around, from many a village steeple  
The sabbath-bells hum over the snow :  
I give a blessing to parson and people  
Across the fields as away I go.

Over the hills and over the meadows  
Gay is my way till day be done :  
Blue as the heaven are all the shadows,  
And every light is gold in the sun.

### I I

THE sea keeps not the Sabbath day,  
His waves come rolling evermore ;  
His noisy toil grindeth the shore,  
And all the cliff is drencht with spray.

Here as we sit, my love and I,  
Under the pine upon the hill,  
The sadness of the clouded sky,  
The bitter wind, the gloomy roar,  
The seamew's melancholy cry  
With loving fancy suit but ill.

We talk of moons and cooling suns,  
Of geologic time and tide,  
The eternal sluggards that abide  
While our fair love so swiftly runs,

Of nature that doth half consent  
That man should guess her dreary scheme  
Lest he should live too well content  
In his fair house of mirth and dream :

Whose labour irks his ageing heart,  
His heart that wearies of desire,  
Being so fugitive a part  
Of what so slowly must expire.

## *New Poems*

She in her agelong toil and care  
Persistent, wearies not nor stays,  
Mocking alike hope and despair.

—Ah, but she too can mock our praise,  
Enchanted on her brighter days,

Days, that the thought of grief refuse,  
Days that are one with human art,  
Worthy of the Virgilian muse,  
Fit for the gaiety of Mozart.

### 12

RIDING adown the country lanes  
One day in spring,  
Heavy at heart with all the pains  
Of man's imagining :—

The mist was not yet melted quite  
Into the sky :  
The small round sun was dazzling white,  
The merry larks sang high :

The grassy northern slopes were laid  
In sparkling dew,  
Out of the slow-retreating shade  
Turning from sleep anew :

Deep in the sunny vale a burn  
Ran with the lane,  
O'erhung with ivy, moss and fern  
It laughed in joyful strain :

And primroses shot long and lush  
Their cluster'd cream ;  
Robin and wren and amorous thrush  
Carol'd above the stream :



## *New Poems*

The stillness of the lenten air  
    Call'd into sound  
The motions of all life that were  
    In field and farm around :  
So fair it was, so sweet and bright,  
    The jocund Spring  
Awoke in me the old delight  
    Of man's imagining,  
Riding adown the country lanes :  
    The larks sang high.—  
O heart ! for all thy griefs and pains  
    Thou shalt be loth to die.

### 13

#### PATER FILIO

SENSE with keenest edge unused,  
    Yet unsteel'd by scathing fire ;  
Lovely feet as yet unbruised  
    On the ways of dark desire ;  
Sweetest hope that lookest smiling  
O'er the wilderness defiling !  
Why such beauty, to be blighted  
    By the swarm of foul destruction ?  
Why such innocence delighted,  
    When sin stalks to thy seduction ?  
All the litanies e'er chaunted  
Shall not keep thy faith undaunted.  
I have pray'd the sainted Morning  
    To unclasp her hands to hold thee ;  
From resignful Eve's adorning  
    Stol'n a robe of peace to enfold thee ;  
With all charms of man's contriving  
Arm'd thee for thy lonely striving.

## *New Poems*

Me too once unthinking Nature,  
—Whence Love's timeless mockery took me,—  
Fashion'd so divine a creature,  
Yea, and like a beast forsook me.  
I forgave, but tell the measure  
Of her crime in thee, my treasure.

### 14

#### NOVEMBER

THE lonely season in lonely lands, when fled  
Are half the birds, and mists lie low, and the sun  
Is rarely seen, nor strayeth far from his bed ;  
The short days pass unwelcomed one by one.

Out by the ricks the mantled engine stands  
Crestfallen, deserted,—for now all hands  
Are told to the plough,—and ere it is dawn appear  
The teams following and crossing far and near,  
As hour by hour they broaden the brown bands  
Of the striped fields ; and behind them firk and prance  
The heavy rooks, and daws grey-pated dance :  
As awhile, surmounting a crest, in sharp outline  
(A miniature of toil, a gem's design,)  
They are pictured, horses and men, or now near by  
Above the lane they shout lifting the share,  
By the trim hedgerow bloom'd with purple air ;  
Where, under the thorns, dead leaves in huddle lie  
Packed by the gales of Autumn, and in and out  
The small wrens glide  
With a happy note of cheer,  
And yellow amoretts flutter above and about,  
Gay, familiar in fear.

## *New Poems*

And now, if the night shall be cold, across the sky  
Linnets and twites, in small flocks helter-skelter,  
All the afternoon to the gardens fly,  
From thistle-pastures hurrying to gain the shelter  
Of American rhododendron or cherry-laurel :  
And here and there, near chilly setting of sun,  
In an isolated tree a congregation  
Of starlings chatter and chide,  
Thickset as summer leaves, in garrulous quarrel :  
Suddenly they hush as one,—  
The tree top springs,—  
And off, with a whirr of wings,  
They fly by the score  
To the holly-thicket, and there with myriads more  
Dispute for the roosts ; and from the unseen nation  
A babel of tongues, like running water unceasing,  
Makes live the wood, the flocking cries increasing,  
Wrangling discordantly, incessantly,  
While falls the night on them self-occupied ;  
The long dark night, that lengthens slow,  
Deepening with Winter to starve grass and tree,  
And soon to bury in snow  
The Earth, that, sleeping 'neath her frozen stole,  
Shall dream a dream crept from the sunless pole  
Of how her end shall be.

### 15

#### WINTER NIGHTFALL

THE day begins to droop,—  
Its course is done :  
But nothing tells the place  
Of the setting sun.

## *New Poems*

The hazy darkness deepens,  
And up the lane  
You may hear, but cannot see,  
The homing wain.

An engine pants and hums  
In the farm hard by :  
Its lowering smoke is lost  
In the lowering sky.

The soaking branches drip,  
And all night through  
The dropping will not cease  
In the avenue.

A tall man there in the house  
Must keep his chair :  
He knows he will never again  
Breathe the spring air :

His heart is worn with work ;  
He is giddy and sick  
If he rise to go as far  
As the nearest rick :

He thinks of his morn of life,  
His hale, strong years ;  
And braves as he may the night  
Of darkness and tears.

### 16

SINCE we loved,—(the earth that shook  
As we kissed, fresh beauty took)—  
Love hath been as poets paint,  
Life as heaven is to a saint ;  
All my joys my hope excel,  
All my work hath prosper'd well,  
All my songs have happy been,  
O my love, my life, my queen.

## *New Poems*

17

WHEN Death to either shall come,—  
I pray it be first to me,—  
Be happy as ever at home,  
If so, as I wish, it be.

Possess thy heart, my own ;  
And sing to the child on thy knee,  
Or read to thyself alone  
The songs that I made for thee.

18

### WISHES

I WISH'D to sing thy grace, but nought  
Found upon earth that could compare :  
Some day, maybe, in heaven, I thought,—  
If I should win the welcome there,—

There might I make thee many a song :  
But now it is enough to say  
I ne'er have done our life the wrong  
Of wishing for a happier day.

19

### A LOVE LYRIC

WHY art thou sad, my dearest ?  
What terror is it thou fearest,  
Braver who art than I  
The fiend to defy ?

Why art thou sad, my dearest ?  
And why in tears appearest,  
Closer than I that wert  
At hiding thy hurt ?

## *New Poems*

Why art thou sad, my dearest,  
Since now my voice thou hearest?  
Who with a kiss restore  
Thy valour of yore.

20

EPΩΣ

WHY hast thou nothing in thy face?  
Thou idol of the human race,  
Thou tyrant of the human heart,  
The flower of lovely youth that art;  
Yea, and that standest in thy youth  
An image of eternal Truth,  
With thy exuberant flesh so fair,  
That only Pheidias might compare,  
Ere from his chaste marmoreal form  
Time had decayed the colours warm;  
Like to his gods in thy proud dress,  
Thy starry sheen of nakedness.

Surely thy body is thy mind,  
For in thy face is nought to find,  
Only thy soft unchristen'd smile,  
That shadows neither love nor guile,  
But shameless will and power immense,  
In secret sensuous innocence.

O king of joy, what is thy thought?  
I dream thou knowest it is nought,  
And wouldst in darkness come, but thou  
Makest the light where'er thou go.  
Ah yet no victim of thy grace,  
None who e'er long'd for thy embrace,  
Hath cared to look upon thy face.

THE FAIR BRASS

AN effigy of brass  
Trodden by careless feet  
Of worshippers that pass,  
Beautiful and complete,

Lieth in the sombre aisle  
Of this old church unwreckt,  
And still from modern style  
Shielded by kind neglect.

It shows a warrior arm'd :  
Across his iron breast  
His hands by death are charm'd  
To leave his sword at rest,

Wherewith he led his men  
O'ersea, and smote to hell  
The astonisht Saracen,  
Nor doubted he did well.

Would we could teach our sons  
His trust in face of doom,  
Or give our bravest ones  
A comparable tomb :

Such as to look on shrives  
The heart of half its care ;  
So in each line survives  
The spirit that made it fair ;

So fair the characters,  
With which the dusty scroll,  
That tells his title, stirs  
A requiem for his soul.

## *New Poems*

Yet dearer far to me,  
And brave as he are they,  
Who fight by land and sea  
For England at this day ;

Whose vile memorials,  
In mournful marbles gilt,  
Deface the beauteous walls  
By growing glory built :

Heirs of our antique shrines,  
Sires of our future fame,  
Whose starry honour shines  
In many a noble name

Across the deathful days,  
Link'd in the brotherhood  
That loves our country's praise,  
And lives for heavenly good.

### 22

## THE DUTEOUS HEART

SPIRIT of grace and beauty,  
Whom men so much miscall :  
Maidenly, modest duty,  
I cry thee fair befall !

Pity for them that shun thee,  
Sorrow for them that hate,  
Glory, hath any won thee  
To dwell in high estate !

But rather thou delightest  
To walk in humble ways,  
Keeping thy favour brightest  
Uncrown'd by foolish praise ;



## *New Poems*

In such retirement dwelling,  
Where, hath the worldling been,  
He straight returneth telling  
Of sights that he hath seen,

Of simple men and truest  
Faces of girl and boy ;  
The souls whom thou enduest  
With gentle peace and joy.

Fair from my song befall thee,  
Spirit of beauty and grace !  
Men that so much miscall thee  
Have never seen thy face.

### 23

#### THE IDLE FLOWERS

I HAVE sown upon the fields  
Eyebright and Pimpernel,  
And Pansy and Poppy-seed  
Ripen'd and scatter'd well,

And silver Lady-smock  
The meads with light to fill,  
Cowslip and Buttercup,  
Daisy and Daffodil ;

King-cup and Fleur-de-lys  
Upon the marsh to meet  
With Comfrey, Watermint,  
Loose-strife and Meadowsweet ;

And all along the stream  
My care hath not forgot  
Crowfoot's white galaxy  
And love's Forget-me-not :

## *New Poems*

And where high grasses wave  
Shall great Moon-daisies blink,  
With Rattle and Sorrel sharp  
And Robin's ragged pink.

Thick on the woodland floor  
Gay company shall be,  
Primrose and Hyacinth  
And frail Anemone,

Perennial Strawberry-bloom,  
Woodsorrel's pencilled veil,  
Dishevel'd Willow-weed  
And Orchis purple and pale,

Bugle, that blushes blue,  
And Woodruff's snowy gem,  
Proud Foxglove's finger-bells  
And Spurge with milky stem.

High on the downs so bare,  
Where thou dost love to climb,  
Pink Thrift and Milkwort are,  
Lotus and scented Thyme;

And in the shady lanes  
Bold Arum's hood of green,  
Herb Robert, Violet,  
Starwort and Celandine;

And by the dusty road  
Bedstraw and Mullein tall,  
With red Valerian  
And Toadflax on the wall,

Yarrow and Chicory,  
That hath for hue no like,  
Silene and Mallow mild  
And Agrimony's spike,

## *New Poems*

Blue-eyed Veronicas  
And grey-faced Scabious  
And downy Silverweed  
And striped Convolvulus:

Harebell shall haunt the banks,  
And thro' the hedgerow peer  
Withwind and Snapdragon  
And Nightshade's flower of fear.

And where men never sow,  
Have I my Thistles set,  
Ragwort and stiff Wormwood  
And straggling Mignonette,

Bugloss and Burdock rank  
And prickly Teasel high,  
With Umbels yellow and white,  
That come to kexes dry.

Pale Chlora shalt thou find,  
Sun-loving Centaury,  
Cranesbill and Sinjunwort,  
Cinquefoil and Betony:

Shock-headed Dandelion,  
That drank the fire of the sun:  
Hawkweed and Marigold,  
Cornflower and Campion.

Let Oak and Ash grow strong,  
Let Beech her branches spread;  
Let Grass and Barley throng  
And waving Wheat for bread;

Be share and sickle bright  
To labour at all hours;  
For thee and thy delight  
I have made the idle flowers.

## *New Poems*

But now 'tis Winter, child,  
And bitter northwinds blow,  
The ways are wet and wild,  
The land is laid in snow.

24

### DUNSTONE HILL

A COTTAGE built of native stone  
Stands on the mountain-moor alone,  
High from man's dwelling on the wide  
And solitary mountain-side,

The purple mountain-side, where all  
The dewy night the meteors fall,  
And the pale stars musically set  
To the watery bells of the rivulet,

And all day long, purple and dun,  
The vast moors stretch beneath the sun,  
The wide wind passeth fresh and hale,  
And whirring grouse and blackcock sail.

Ah, heavenly Peace, where dost thou dwell?  
Surely 'twas here thou hadst a cell,  
Till flaming Love, wandering astray  
With fury and blood, drove thee away.—

Far down across the valley deep  
The town is hid in smoky sleep,  
At moonless nightfall wakening slow  
Upon the dark with lurid glow:

Beyond, afar the widening view  
Merges into the soften'd blue,  
Cornfield and forest, hill and stream,  
Fair England in her pastoral dream.

## *New Poems*

To one who looketh from this hill  
Life seems asleep, all is so still :  
Nought passeth save the travelling shade  
Of clouds on high that float and fade :

Nor since this landscape saw the sun  
Might other motion o'er it run,  
Till to man's scheming heart it came  
To make a steed of steel and flame.

Him may you mark in every vale  
Moving beneath his fleecy trail,  
And tell whene'er the motions die  
Where every town and hamlet lie.

He gives the distance life to-day,  
Rushing upon his level'd way  
From man's abode to man's abode,  
And mocks the Roman's vaunted road,

Which o'er the moor purple and dun  
Still wanders white beneath the sun,  
Deserted now of men and lone  
Save for this cot of native stone.

There ever by the whiten'd wall  
Standeth a maiden fair and tall,  
And all day long in vacant dream  
Watcheth afar the flying steam.

### 25

## SCREAMING TARN

THE saddest place that e'er I saw  
Is the deep tarn above the inn  
That crowns the mountain-road, whereby  
One southward bound his way must win.

## *New Poems*

Sunk on the table of the ridge  
From its deep shores is nought to see:  
The unresting wind lashes and chills  
Its shivering ripples ceaselessly.

Three sides 'tis banked with stones aslant,  
And down the fourth the rushes grow,  
And yellow sedge fringing the edge  
With lengthen'd image all arow.

'Tis square and black, and on its face  
When noon is still, the mirror'd sky  
Looks dark and further from the earth  
Than when you gaze at it on high.

At mid of night, if one be there,  
—So say the people of the hill—  
A fearful shriek of death is heard,  
One sudden scream both loud and shrill.

And some have seen on stilly nights,  
And when the moon was clear and round,  
Bubbles which to the surface swam  
And burst as if they held the sound.—

'Twas in the days ere hapless Charles  
Losing his crown had lost his head,  
This tale is told of him who kept  
The inn upon the watershed :

He was a lowbred ruin'd man  
Whom lawless times set free from fear:  
One evening to his house there rode  
A young and gentle cavalier.

With curling hair and linen fair  
And jewel-hilted sword he went ;  
The horse he rode he had ridden far,  
And he was with his journey spent.

## *New Poems*

He asked a lodging for the night,  
His valise from his steed unbound,  
He let none bear it but himself  
And set it by him on the ground.

'Here 's gold or jewels,' thought the host,  
'That 's carrying south to find the king.'  
He chattered many a loyal word,  
And scraps of royal airs gan sing.

His guest thereat grew more at ease  
And o'er his wine he gave a toast,  
But little ate, and to his room  
Carried his sack behind the host.

'Now rest you well,' the host he said,  
But of his wish the word fell wide ;  
Nor did he now forget his son  
Who fell in fight by Cromwell's side.

Revenge and poverty have brought  
Full gentler heart than his to crime ;  
And he was one by nature rude,  
Born to foul deeds at any time.

With unshod feet at dead of night  
In stealth he to the guest-room crept,  
Lantern and dagger in his hand,  
And stabbed his victim while he slept.

But as he struck a scream there came,  
A fearful scream so loud and shrill :  
He whelm'd the face with pillows o'er,  
And lean'd till all had long been still.

Then to the face the flame he held  
To see there should no life remain :—  
When lo ! his brutal heart was quell'd :  
'Twas a fair woman he had slain.

## *New Poems*

The tan upon her face was paint,  
The manly hair was torn away,  
Soft was the breast that he had pierced ;  
Beautiful in her death she lay.

His was no heart to faint at crime,  
Tho' half he wished the deed undone.  
He pulled the valise from the bed  
To find what booty he had won.

He cut the straps, and pushed within  
His murderous fingers to their theft.  
A deathly sweat came o'er his brow,  
He had no sense nor meaning left.

He touched not gold, it was not cold,  
It was not hard, it felt like flesh.  
He drew out by the curling hair  
A young man's head, and murder'd fresh ;

A young man's head, cut by the neck.  
But what was dreader still to see,  
Her whom he had slain he saw again,  
The twain were like as like can be.

Brother and sister if they were,  
Both in one shroud they now were wound,—  
Across his back and down the stair,  
Out of the house without a sound.

He made his way unto the tarn,  
The night was dark and still and dank ;  
The ripple chuckling neath the boat  
Laughed as he drew it to the bank.

Upon the bottom of the boat  
He laid his burden flat and low,  
And on them laid the square sandstones  
That round about the margin go.



## *New Poems*

Stone upon stone he weighed them down,  
Until the boat would hold no more ;  
The freeboard now was scarce an inch :  
He stripp'd his clothes and push'd from shore.

All naked to the middle pool  
He swam behind in the dark night ;  
And there he let the water in  
And sank his terror out of sight.

He swam ashore, and donn'd his dress,  
And scraped his bloody fingers clean ;  
Ran home and on his victim's steed  
Mounted, and never more was seen.

But to a comrade ere he died  
He told his story guess'd of none :  
So from his lips the crime returned  
To haunt the spot where it was done.

### 26

## THE ISLE OF ACHILLES

(FROM THE GREEK)

Τὸν φίλτατόν σοι παῖδ' ἐμοί τ', Ἀχιλλέα  
ὕψει δόμους ναίοντα νησιωτικούς  
Λευκὴν κατ' ἄκτῃν ἐντὸς Εὐξείνου πόρου.

Eur. And. 1250.

VOYAGING northwards by the western strand  
Of the Euxine sea we came to where the land  
Sinks low in salt morass and wooded plain :  
Here mighty Ister pushes to the main,  
Forking his turbid flood in channels three  
To plough the sands wherewith he chokes the sea.

## *New Poems*

Against his middle arm, not many a mile  
In the offing of black water is the isle  
Named of Achilles, or as Leukê known,  
Which tender Thetis, counselling alone  
With her wise sire beneath the ocean-wave  
Unto her child's departed spirit gave,  
Where he might still his love and fame enjoy,  
Through the vain Danaan cause fordone at Troy.  
Thither Achilles passed, and long fulfill'd  
His earthly lot, as the high gods had will'd,  
Far from the rivalries of men, from strife,  
From arms, from woman's love and toil of life.  
Now of his lone abode I will unfold  
What there I saw, or was by others told.

There is in truth a temple on the isle;  
Therein a wooden statue of rude style  
And workmanship antique with helm of lead:  
Else all is desert, uninhabited;  
Only a few goats browse the wind-swept rocks,  
And oft the stragglers of their starving flocks  
Are caught and sacrificed by whomsoe'er,  
Whoever of chance or purpose hither fare:  
About the fence lie strewn their bleaching bones.

But in the temple jewels and precious stones,  
Upheapt with golden rings and vials lie,  
Thankofferings to Achilles, and thereby,  
Written or scratch'd upon the walls in view,  
Inscriptions, with the givers' names thereto,  
Some in Romaic character, some Greek,  
As each man in the tongue that he might speak  
Wrote verse of praise, or prayer for good to come,  
To Achilles most, but to Patroclus some;  
For those who strongly would Achilles move  
Approach him by the pathway of his love.

## *New Poems*

Thousands of birds frequent the sheltering shrine,  
The dippers and the swimmers of the brine,  
Sea-mew and gull and diving cormorant,  
Fishers that on the high cliff make their haunt  
Sheer inaccessible, and sun themselves  
Huddled arow upon the narrow shelves :—  
And surely no like wonder e'er hath been  
As that such birds should keep the temple clean ;  
But thus they do : at earliest dawn of day  
They flock to sea and in the waters play,  
And when they well have wet their plumage light,  
Back to the sanctuary they take flight  
Splashing the walls and columns with fresh brine,  
Till all the stone doth fairly drip and shine,  
When off again they skim asea for more  
And soon returning sprinkle steps and floor,  
And sweep all cleanly with their wide-spread wings.

From other men I have learnt further things.  
If any of free purpose, thus they tell,  
Sail'd hither to consult the oracle,—  
For oracle there was,—they sacrificed  
Such victims as they brought, if such sufficed,  
And some they slew, some to the god set free :  
But they who driven from their course at sea  
Chanced on the isle, took of the goats thereon  
And pray'd Achilles to accept his own.  
Then made they a gift, and when they had offer'd once,  
If to their question there was no response,  
They added to the gift and asked again ;  
Yea twice and more, until the god should deign  
Answer to give, their offering they renew'd ;  
Whereby great riches to the shrine ensued.  
And when both sacrifice and gifts were made  
They worship'd at the shrine, and as they pray'd

## *New Poems*

Sailors aver that often hath been seen  
A man like to a god, of warrior mien,  
A beauteous form of figure swift and strong ;  
Down on his shoulders his light hair hung long  
And his full armour was enchast with gold :  
While some, who with their eyes might nought behold,  
Say that with music strange the air was stir'd ;  
And some there are, who have both seen and heard :  
And if a man wish to be favour'd more,  
He need but spend one night upon the shore ;  
To him in sleep Achilles will appear  
And lead him to his tent, and with good cheer  
Show him all friendliness that men desire ;  
Patroclus pours the wine, and he his lyre  
Takes from the pole and plays the strains thereon  
Which Cheiron taught him first on Pelion.

These things I tell as they were told to me,  
Nor do I question but it well may be :  
For sure I am that, if man ever was,  
Achilles was a hero, both because  
Of his high birth and beauty, his country's call  
His valour of soul, his early death withal,  
For Homer's praise, the crown of human art ;  
And that above all praise he had at heart  
A gentler passion in her sovran sway,  
And when his love died threw his life away.

AN ANNIVERSARY

HE

BRIGHT, my belovèd, be thy day,  
This eve of Summer's fall :  
And Autumn mass his flowers gay  
To crown thy festival !

SHE

I care not if the morn be bright,  
Living in thy love-rays :  
No flower I need for my delight,  
Being crownèd with thy praise.

HE

O many years and joyfully  
This sun to thee return ;  
Ever all men speak well of thee,  
Nor any angel mourn !

SHE

For length of life I would not pray,  
If thy life were to seek ;  
Nor ask what men and angels say  
But when of thee they speak.

HE

Arise ! The sky hath heard my song,  
The flowers o'erhear thy praise ;  
And little loves are waking long  
To wish thee happy days.

# *New Poems*

28

## REGINA CARA

JUBILEE-SONG, FOR MUSIC, 1897

HARK ! The world is full of thy praise,  
England's Queen of many days ;  
Who, knowing how to rule the free,  
Hast given a crown to monarchy.

Honour, Truth and growing Peace  
Follow Britannia's wide increase,  
And Nature yield her strength unknown  
To the wisdom born beneath thy throne !

In wisdom and love firm is thy fame :  
Enemies bow to revere thy name :  
The world shall never tire to tell  
Praise of the queen that reignèd well.

O FELIX ANIMA, DOMINA PRAECLARA,  
AMORE SEMPER CORONABERE  
REGINA CARA.

# LATER POEMS

OCCASIONAL ODES &c.



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*Novello, Ewer & Co.*



# LATER POEMS

## I

### RECOLLECTIONS OF SOLITUDE

#### AN ELEGY

ENDED are many days, and now but few  
Remain ; since therefore it is happy and true  
That memoried joys keep ever their delight,  
Like steadfast stars in the blue vault of night,  
While hours of pain (among those heavenly spheres  
Like falling meteors, the martyr's tears)  
Dart their long trails at random, and anon,  
Ere we exclaim, pass, and for aye are gone ;  
Therefore my heedful thought will oft restore  
The long light-hearted days that are no more,  
Save where in her memorial crypt they shine  
Spangling the silent past with joy divine.

But why in dream of this enchanted mood  
Should all my boyhood seem a solitude ?  
Good reason know I, when I wander there,  
In that transmuted scene, why all is fair ;  
The woods as when in holiday of spring  
Million buds burst, and flowers are blossoming ;  
The meadows deep in grass, the fields unshorn  
In beauty of the multitudinous corn,  
Where the strait alleys hide me, wall'd between  
High bloomy stalks and rustling banners green ;  
The gardens, too, in dazzling hues full-blown,  
With wafted scent and blazing petals strewn ;  
The orchards reddening thro' the patient hours,  
While idle autumn in his mossy bowers

## *Later Poems*

Inviteth meditation to endear  
The sanctuaries of the mellowing year;  
And every spot wherein I loved to stray  
Hath borrowed radiance of eternal day;  
But why am I ever alone, alone?  
Here in the corner of a field my throne,  
Now in the branching chair of some tall tree  
Drinking the gale in bird-like liberty;  
Or to the seashore wandered in the sun  
To watch the fateful waves break one by one;  
Or if on basking downs supine I lie  
Bathing my spirit in blue calms of the sky;  
Or to the river bank am stolen by night  
Harkening unto the moonlit ripple bright  
That warbles o'er the shallows of smooth stone;  
Why should my memory find me all alone,  
When I had such companions every day  
Jocund and dear? 'Twixt glimpses of their play  
'Tis a vast solitude, wherein I see  
Only myself and what I came to be.

Yet never think, dear spirits, if now ye may  
Remember aught of that brief earthly day,  
Ere ye the mournful Stygian river crost,  
From our familiar home too early lost,—  
O never think that I your tears forget,  
Or that I loved not well, or love not yet.

Nor ye who held my heart in passion's chain,—  
As kings and queens succeed in glorious reign—  
When, as a man, I made you to outvie  
God's work, and, as a god, then set you by  
Among the sainted throng in holiest shrine  
Of mythic creed and poetry divine;  
True was my faith, and still your loves endure,  
The jewels of my fancy, bright and pure.

## *Later Poems*

Nor only in fair places do I see  
The picture fair now it has ceased to be :  
For fate once led me, and myself some days  
Did I devote, to dull laborious ways,  
By soaring thought detained to tread full low,—  
Yea might I say unbeauteous paths of woe  
And dreary abodes, had not my youthful sprite  
Hallow'd each nook with legends of delight.

Ah ! o'er that smoky town who looketh now  
By winter sunset from the dark hill-brow,  
Under the dying trees exultantly  
Nursing the sting of human tragedy ?  
Or in that little room upstairs'd so high,  
Where London's roofs in thickest huddle lie,  
Who now returns at evening to entice  
To his fireside the joys of Paradise ?  
Once sacred was that hearth, and bright the air ;  
The flame of man's redemption flickered there,  
In worship of those spirits, whose deathless fames  
Have thrilled the stars of heaven to hear their names ;  
They that excell'd in wisdom to create  
Beauty, with mortal passion conquering fate ;  
And, mid the sovran powers of elder time,  
The loveliness of music and new rhyme,  
The masters young that first enthralled me ;  
Of whom if I should name, whom then but thee,  
Sweet Shelley, or the boy whose book was found  
Thrust in thy bosom on thy body drowned ?

O mighty Muse, wooer of virgin thought,  
Beside thy charm all else counteth as nought ;  
The revelation of thy smile doth make  
Him whom thou lovest reckless for thy sake ;  
Earthborn of suffering, that knowest well  
To call thine own, and with enamouring spell

## *Later Poems*

Feedest the stolen powers of godlike youth  
On dear imagination's only truth,  
Building with song a temple of desire ;  
And with the yearning music of thy quire,  
In nuptial sacrament of thought and sense  
Hallowest for toil the hours of indolence :  
Thou in thy melancholic beauty drest,  
Subduest ill to serve thy fair behest,  
With tragic tears, and sevenfold purified  
Silver of mirth ; and with extremest pride,  
With secret doctrine and unfathomed lore  
Remainest yet a child for evermore,  
The only enchantress of the earth that art  
To cheer his day and staunch man's bleeding heart.

O heavenly Muse, for heavenly thee we call  
Who in the fire of love refinest all,  
Accurst is he who heark'neth not thy voice ;  
But happy he who, numbered of thy choice,  
Walketh aloof from nature's clouded plan :  
For all God's world is but the thought of man ;  
Wherein hast thou re-formed a world apart,  
The mutual mirror of his better heart.  
There is no foulness, misery, nor sin,  
But he who loves finds his desire therein,  
And there with thee in lonely commerce lives :  
Nay, all that nature gave or fortune gives,  
Joys that his spirit is most jealous of,  
His only-embraced and best-deserving love,  
Who walketh in the noon of heavenly praise,  
The troubled godhead of his children's gaze,  
Wear thine eternity, and are loved best  
By thee transfigured and in thee possest ;  
Who madest beauty, and from thy boundless store  
Of beauty shalt create for evermore.

1900.

## *Later Poems*

### 2

GAY Marigold is frolic,  
She laughs till summer is done ;  
She hears the Grillie chirping  
All day i' the blazing sun.

But when the pale moon rises,  
She fain her face would hide ;  
For the high Queen of sorrows  
Disdains her empty pride.

Fair Primrose haunts the shadow  
With children of the Spring,  
Till in the bloomy woodland  
The nightingale will sing.

And when he lauds the May-night  
And spirits throng the grove,  
The moon shines thro' the branches  
And floods her heart with love.

### 3

#### MATRES DOLOROSAE

YE Spartan mothers, gentle ones,  
Of lion-hearted, loving sons,  
Fal'n, the flower of English youth,  
To a barbarous foe in a land uncouth :—

O what a delicate sacrifice !  
Unequal the stake and costly the price  
As when the queen of Love deplor'd  
Her darling by the wild-beast gor'd.

## *Later Poems*

They rode to war as if to the hunt,  
But ye at home, ye bore the brunt,  
Bore the siege of torturing fears,  
Fed your hope on the bread of tears.

Proud and spotless warriors they  
With love or sword to lead the way;  
For ye had cradled heart and hand,  
The commander hearken'd to your command.

Ah, weeping mothers, now all is o'er,  
Ye know your honour and mourn no more:  
Nor ask ye a name in England's story,  
Who gave your dearest for her glory.

*May 20, 1902.*

### 4

#### A VIGNETTE

Among the meadows  
lightly going,  
With worship and joy  
my heart o'erflowing,

Far from town  
and toil of living,  
To a holy day  
my spirit giving, . . .

\* \* \*

Thou tender flower,  
I kneel beside thee  
Wondering why God  
so beautified thee.—

## *Later Poems*

An answering thought  
    within me springeth,  
A bloom of the mind  
    her vision bringeth.

Between the dim hill's  
    distant azure  
And flowery foreground  
    of sparkling pleasure

I see the company  
    of figures sainted,  
For whom the picture  
    of earth was painted.

Those robèd seërs  
    who made man's story  
The crown of Nature,  
    Her cause his glory.

They walk in the city  
    which they have builded,  
The city of God  
    from evil shielded :

To them for canopy  
    the vault of heaven,  
The flowery earth  
    for carpet is given ;

Whereon I wander  
    not unknowing,  
With worship and joy  
    my heart o'erflowing.

1901.

## *Later Poems*

### 5

#### MILLICENT

THOU dimpled Millicent, of merry guesses,  
Strong-limb'd and tall, tossing thy wayward tresses,  
What mystery of the heart can so surprise  
The mirth and music of thy brimming eyes?

Pale-brow, thou knowest not and diest to learn  
The mortal secret that doth in thee burn;  
With look imploring 'If you love me, tell,  
What is it in me that you love so well?'

And suddenly thou stakest all thy charms,  
And leapest on me; and in thy circling arms  
When almost stifled with their wild embrace,  
I feel thy hot tears sheltering on my face.

1901.

### 6

#### VIVAMUS

WHEN thou didst give thy love to me,  
Asking no more of gods or men  
I vow'd I would contented be,  
If Fate should grant us summers ten.

But now that twice the term is sped,  
And ever young my heart and gay,  
I fear the words that then I said,  
And turn my face from Fate away.

To bid thee happily good-bye  
I have no hope that I can see,  
No way that I shall bravely die,  
Unless I give my life for thee.

1901.



## *Later Poems*

### 7

ONE grief of thine  
if truth be confest  
Was joy to me ;  
for it drave to my breast  
Thee, to my heart  
to find thy rest.

How long it was  
I never shall know :  
I watcht the earth  
so stately and slow,  
And the ancient things  
that waste and grow.

But now for me  
what speed devours  
Our heavenly life,  
our brilliant hours !  
How fast they fly,  
the stars and flowers !

### 8

IN still midsummer night  
When the moon is late  
And the stars all watery and white  
For her coming wait,

A spirit, whose eyes are possest  
By wonder new,  
Passeth—her arms upon her breast  
Enwrapt from the dew

## *Later Poems*

In a raiment of azure fold  
With diaper  
Of flower'd embroidery of gold  
Bestarr'd with silver.

The daisy folk are awake  
Their carpet to spread,  
And the thron'd stars gazing on her make  
Fresh crowns for her head,  
Netted in her floating hair  
As she drifteth free  
Between the starriness of the air  
And the starry lea,  
From the silent-shadow'd vale  
By the west wind drawn  
Aloft to melt into the pale  
Moonrise of dawn.

1910.

### 9

## MELANCHOLIA

THE sickness of desire, that in dark days  
Looks on the imagination of despair,  
Forgetteth man, and stinteth God his praise;  
Nor but in sleep findeth a cure for care.

Incertainty that once gave scope to dream  
Of laughing enterprise and glory untold,  
Is now a blackness that no stars redeem,  
A wall of terror in a night of cold.

Fool! thou that hast impossibly desired  
And now impatiently despairest, see  
How nought is changed: Joy's wisdom is attired  
Splendid for others' eyes if not for thee:

Not love or beauty or youth from earth is fled:  
If they delite thee not, 'tis thou art dead.

1904.

## *Later Poems*

10

### TO THE PRESIDENT OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD

SINCE now from woodland mist and flooded clay  
I am fled beside the steep Devonian shore,  
Nor stand for welcome at your gothic door,  
'Neath the fair tower of Magdalen and May,  
Such tribute, Warren, as fond poets pay  
For generous esteem, I write, not more  
Enhearten'd than my need is, reckoning o'er  
My life-long wanderings on the heavenly way :

But well-befriended we become good friends,  
Well-honour'd honourable ; and all attain  
Somewhat by fathering what fortune sends.  
I bid your presidency a long reign,  
True friend ; and may your praise to greater ends  
Aid better men than I, nor me in vain.

11

### TO JOSEPH JOACHIM

BELOV'D of all to whom that Muse is dear  
Who hid her spirit of rapture from the Greek,  
Whereby our art excelleth the antique,  
Perfecting formal beauty to the ear ;  
Thou that hast been in England many a year  
The interpreter who left us nought to seek,  
Making Beethoven's inmost passion speak,  
Bringing the soul of great Sebastian near ·

## *Later Poems*

Their music liveth ever, and 'tis just  
That thou, good Joachim, so high thy skill,  
Rank (as thou shalt upon the heavenly hill)  
Laurel'd with them, for thy ennobling trust  
Remember'd when thy loving hand is still  
And every ear that heard thee stopt with dust.

12

### TO THOS. FLOYD

How fares it, friend, since I by Fate annoy'd  
Left the old home in need of livelier play  
For body and mind? How fare, this many a day,  
The stubborn thews and ageless heart of Floyd?  
If not too well with country sport employ'd,  
Visit my flock, the breezy hill that they  
Choose for their fold; and see, for thence you may,  
From rising walls all roofless yet and void,

The lovely city, thronging tower and spire,  
The mind of the wide landscape, dreaming deep,  
Grey-silvery in the vale; a shrine where keep  
Memorial hopes their pale celestial fire:  
Like man's immortal conscience of desire,  
The spirit that watcheth in me ev'n in my sleep.

1906.

# Later Poems

13

## LA GLOIRE DE VOLTAIRE

A DIALOGUE IN VERSE.

A.

*Je donnerais pour revivre à vingt ans  
L'or de Rothschild, la gloire de Voltaire.*

I like that : Béranger in his printems,  
Voltaire and Rothschild : what three graces there  
Foot it together ! But of old Voltaire,  
I'd ask what Béranger found so sublime  
In that man's glory to adorn his rhyme.  
Was it mere fame ?

B.

Nay : for as wide a fame  
Was won by the gold-garnering millionaire,  
Who in the poet's verse might read his name  
And what is that ? when so much froth and scum  
Float down the stream of Time (as Bacon saith),  
What is that for deliverance from the death ?  
Could any sober man be proud to hold  
A lease of common talk, or die consoled  
For thinking that on lips of fools to come  
He'll live with Pontius Pilate and Tom Thumb ?  
That were more like eternal punishment,  
The true fool's Paradise by all consent.  
Béranger thought to set a crown on merit.

A.

Man's merit ! and to crown it in Voltaire ?  
The modest eye, the gentle, fearless heart,  
The mouth of peace and truth, the angelic spirit !  
Why Arouet was *soufflé* with the leaven,

## *Later Poems*

Of which the little flock was bid beware :  
His very ambition was to play a part ;  
Indifferent whether he did wrong or right,  
So he won credit ; eager to deny  
A lie that failed, by adding lie to lie ;  
Repaying evil unto seven-times-seven ;  
A fount of slander, flattery and spite ;  
Vain, irritable ; true but to his face  
Of mockery and mischievous grimace,  
A monkey of the schools, the saints' despair !

B.

Yet for his voice half Europe stood at pause  
To hear, and when he spoke rang with applause.

A.

Granted he was a wonder of his kind.  
There is a devilish mockery in things  
Which only a born devil can enjoy.  
True banter is of melancholy mind,  
Akin to madness ; thus must Shakespeare toy  
With Hamlet's reason, ere his fine art dare  
Push his relentless humour to the quick ;  
And so his mortal thrusts pierce not the skin.  
But for the superficial bickerings  
That poison life and never seem to prick,  
The reasonable educated grin,  
Truly no wag is equal to Voltaire ,  
His never-dying ripple, wide and light,  
Has nigh the force of Nature : to compare,  
'Tis like the ocean when the sky is bright,  
And the cold north-wind tickles with surprise  
The briny levels of the infinite sea.  
—Shall we conclude his merit was his wit,  
His magic art and versatility ?

## Later Poems

B.

And think of those foredoom'd in Dante's pit,  
Who, sunk at bottom of the loathly slough,  
Made the black mud up-bubble with their sighs;  
And all because they were unkind to Mirth,  
And went with smoky heart and gloomy brow  
The while they lived upon the pleasant earth  
In the sweet air that rallies to the sun,  
And ne'er so much as smiled or gave God thanks:  
Surely a sparkle of the Frenchman's fun  
Had rescued all their souls.

A.

I think I see  
The Deity who in this Heaven abides,  
*Le bon Dieu*, holding both his aching sides,  
With radiant face of Pan, ruddy and hairy:  
Give him his famous whistles and goat-shanks,  
And then present him to Alighieri.

B.

Nay, 'twixt the Frenchman and the Florentine  
I ask no truce, grave Dante weaving well  
His dark-eyed thought into a song divine,  
Drawing high poetry from heaven and hell—  
And him who lightly mockt at all in turn.

A

It follow'd from his mundane thought of art  
That he contemn'd religion: his concern  
Was comfort, taste, and wit: he had no heart  
For man's attempt to build and beautify  
His home in Nature; so he set all by  
That wisdom had evolved with purpose kind;

## *Later Poems*

Stamped it as folly, or as fraud attacked;  
Never discerning how his callow zest  
Was impiously defiling his own nest;  
Whereas the least philosophy may find  
The truths are the ideas; the sole fact  
Is the long story of man's growing mind.

B.

Upon your thistle now I see my fig—  
Béranger thought of Voltaire as a seer,  
A latter-day John Baptist in a wig;  
A herald of that furious gospel-storm  
Of words and blood, that made the nations fear;  
When sickening France adulterously sinn'd  
With Virtue, and went mad conceiving wind.  
He ranks him with those captains of reform,  
Luther and Calvin; who, whate'er they taught,  
Led folk from superstition to free thought.

A.

They did. But whence or whither led Voltaire?  
The steward with fifty talents given in charge,  
Who spent them on himself, and liv'd at large;  
His only virtue that he did not hide  
The pounds, but squander'd them to serve his pride;  
His praise that, cunning in his generation,  
He of the heavenly treasure did not spare  
To win himself an earthly habitation.

B.

Deny him not this laurel, nor to France  
The apostolate of modern tolerance:  
Their Theseus he, who slew the Minotaur,  
The Dragon Persecution, in which war  
He tipp'd the shafts that made the devil bleed;



## *Later Poems*

And won a victory that hath overcome  
Many misdoings in a well-done deed;  
And more, I think, the mind of Christ revealing,  
Yea, more of common-sense and human feeling  
Than all the Creeds and Bulls of Christendom.

### A.

Yet was he only one of them that slew :  
The fiend had taken a deadly wound from Bayle;  
And did he 'roar to see his kingdom fail'  
'Neath Robespierre, or raise his head anew?  
Nay, Voltaire's teaching never cured the heart:  
The lack of human feeling blots his art.  
When most his phrase with indignation burns,  
Still to the gallery his face he turns.

### B.

You bear him hard. Men are of common stuff,  
Each hath some fault, and he had faults enough :  
But of all slanderers that ever were  
A virtuous critic is the most unfair.  
In greatness ever is some good to see ;  
And what is character, unless it be  
The colour of persistent qualities,  
That, like a ground in painting, balances  
All hues and forms, combining with one tone  
Whatever lights or shades are on it thrown ?  
Now Voltaire had of Nature a rich ground,  
Two virtues rarely in conjunction found :  
Industry, which no pedant could excel,  
He matched with gaiety inexhaustible ;  
And with heroic courage held these fast,  
As sailors nail their colours to the mast,  
With ruling excellence atoning all.  
Though, for the rest, he still for praise may call ;

## Later Poems

Prudent to gain, as generous to share  
*Le superflu, chose si nécessaire ;*  
To most a rare companion above scorn,  
To not a few a kind, devoted friend  
Through his long battling life, which in the end  
He strove with good works richly to adorn.  
I have admired, and why should I abuse  
A man who can so long and well amuse?

A.

To some Parisian art there's this objection,  
'Tis mediocrity pushed to perfection.

B.

'Judge not,' say I, 'and ye shall not be judged!'

A.

Let me say, 'praise men, if ye would be praised :'  
Let your unwholesome flattery flow ungrudged,  
And with ungrudging measure shall men pour  
Their stifling homage back till ye be crazed,  
And sane men humour you as fools past cure.  
But these wise maxims deal not with the dead,  
'Tis by example that the young are led,  
And judgement owes its kindness but to them;  
Nor will I praise, call you me hard or nice,  
One that degraded art, and varnished vice.  
They that praise ill thereby themselves condemn.

B.

Béranger could not praise.

A.

Few are who can ;  
Not he : if ever he assay'd to impart  
A title loftier than his own renown,

## *Later Poems*

Native irreverence defied his art,  
His fingers soil'd the lustre of his crown.  
Here he adored what he was envious of,  
The vogue and dazzling fashion of the man.  
But man's true praise, the poet's praise, is love.

B.

And that, perhaps, was hardly his affair . . .  
Pray, now, what set you talking of Voltaire?

A.

This only, that in weeding out my shelves,  
In fatherly regard for babes upgrown,  
Until they learn to garden for themselves,  
Much as I like to keep my sets entire,  
When I came out to you I had just thrown  
Three of his precious works behind the fire.

14

### TO ROBERT BURNS

AN EPISTLE ON INSTINCT

I

THOU art a poet, Robbie Burns,  
Master of words and witty turns,  
Of lilting songs and merry yarns,  
    Drinking and kissing :  
There's much in all thy small concerns,  
    But more that's missing.

2

The wisdom of thy common sense,  
Thy honest hate of vain pretence,  
Thy love and wide benevolence  
    Full often lead thee  
Where feeling is its own defence;  
    Yet while I read thee,

## *Later Poems*

3

It seems but chance that all our race  
Trod not the path of thy disgrace,  
And, living freely to embrace  
    The moment's pleasure,  
Snatch'd not a kiss of Nature's face  
    For all her treasure.

4

The feelings soft, the spirits gay  
Entice on such a flowery way,  
And sovran youth in high heyday  
    Hath such a fashion  
To glorify the bragging sway  
    Of sensual passion.

5

But rakel Chance and Fortune blind  
Had not the power :—Eternal Mind  
Led man upon a way design'd,  
    By strait selection  
Of pleasurable ways, to find  
    Severe perfection.

6

For Nature did not idly spend  
Pleasure : she ruled it should attend  
On every act that doth amend  
    Our life's condition :  
'Tis therefore not well-being's end,  
    But its fruition.

7

Beasts that inherited delight  
In what promoted health or might,  
Survived their cousins in the fight :  
    If some—like Adam—  
Prefer'd the wrong tree to the right,  
    The devil had 'em.

## *Later Poems*

8

So when man's Reason took the reins,  
She found that she was saved her pains ;  
She had but to approve the gains  
    Of agelong inscience,  
And spin it fresh into her brains  
    As moral conscience.

9

But Instinct in the beasts that live  
Is of three kinds ; (Nature did give  
To man three shakings in her sieve)—  
    The first is Racial,  
The second Self-preservative,  
    The third is Social.

10

Without the first no race could be,  
So 'tis the strongest of the three ;  
Nay, of such forceful tyranny  
    'Tis hard to attune it,  
Because 'twas never made to agree  
    To serve the unit :

11

Art will not picture it, its name  
In common talk is utter shame :  
And yet hath Reason learn'd to tame  
    Its conflagration  
Into a sacramental flame  
    Of consecration.

12

Those hundred thousand years, ah me !  
Of budding soul ! What slow degree,  
With aim so dim, so true ! We see,  
    Now that we know them,  
Our humble cave-folk ancestry,  
    How much we owe them :

## *Later Poems*

13

While with the savage beasts around  
They fought at odds, yet underground  
Their miserable life was sound ;  
    Their loves and quarrels  
Did well th' ideal bases found  
    Of art and morals :

14

One prime distinction, Good and Ill,  
Was all their notion, all their skill ;—  
But Unity stands next to Nil ;—  
    Want of analysis  
Saved them from doubts that wreck the Will  
    With pale paralysis.

15

In vain philosophers dispute  
'Is Good or Pleasure our pursuit ?'—  
The fruit likes man, not man the fruit ;  
    The good that likes him,  
The good man's pleasure 'tis to do 't ;  
    That 's how it strikes him.

16

Tho' Science hide beneath her feet  
The point where moral reasonings meet,  
The vicious circle is complete ;  
    There is no lodgement  
Save Aristotle's own retreat,  
    The just man's judgement.

17

And if thou wert not that just man,  
Wild Robin, born to crown his plan,  
We shall not for that matter ban  
    Thy petty treason,  
Nor closely thy defection scan  
    From highest Reason.

## *Later Poems*

18

Thou might'st have lived like Robin Hood  
Waylaying Abbots in the wood,  
Doing whate'er thee-seemèd good,  
The law defying,  
And 'mong the people's heroes stood  
Living and dying :

19

Yet better bow than his thou bendest,  
And well the poor man thou befriendest,  
And oftentime an ill amendest ;  
When, if truth touch thee,  
Sharply the arrow home thou sendest ;  
There's none can match thee.

20

So pity it is thou knew'st the teen  
Of sad remorse : the Might-have-been  
Shall not o'ercloud thy merry scene  
With vain repentance,  
Nor forfeit from thy spirit keen  
My friendly sentence.

15

### THE PORTRAIT OF A GRANDFATHER

WITH mild eyes agaze, and lips ready to speak,  
Whereon the yearning of love, the warning of wisdom plays,  
One portrait ever charms me and teaches me when I seek :

It is of him whom I, remembering my young days,  
Imagine fathering my father ; when he, in sonship afore,  
Liv'd honouring and obeying the eyes now pictur'd agaze,  
The lips ready to speak, that promise but speak no more.

## *Later Poems*

O high parental claim, that were not but for the knowing,  
O fateful bond of duty, O more than body that bore,  
The smile that guides me to right, the gaze that follows  
my going,  
How had I stray'd without thee ! and yet how few will seek  
The spirit-hands, that heaven, in tender-free bestowing,  
Holds to her children, to guide the wandering and aid  
the weak.

And Thee ! ah what of thee, thou lover of men ? if truly  
A painter had stell'd thee there, with thy lips ready to speak,  
In all-fathering passion to souls enchanted newly,  
—Tenderer call than of sire to son, or of lover to maiden,—  
Ever ready to speak to us, if we will hearken duly,  
'Come, O come unto me, ye weary and heavy-laden !'  
[1880.]

### 16

## AN INVITATION TO THE OXFORD PAGEANT, JULY 1907

FAIR lady of learning, playfellow of spring,  
Who to thy towery hospice in the vale  
Invitest all, with queenly claim to bring  
Scholars from every land within thy pale ;  
If aught our pageantry may now avail  
To paint thine antique story to the eye,  
Inspire the scene, and bid thy herald cry  
Welcome to all, and to all comers hail !

Come hither, then he crieth, and hail to all .  
Bow each his heart a pilgrim at her shrine,  
Whatever chance hath led you to my call,  
Ye that love pomp, and ye that seek a sign,



## Odes

Or on the low earth look for things divine ;  
Nor ye, whom reverend Camus near-allied,  
Writes in the roll of his ennobled pride,  
Refrain your praise and love to mix with mine.

Praise her, the mother of celestial moods,  
Who o'er the saints' inviolate array  
Hath starr'd her robe of fair beatitudes  
With jewels worn by Hellas, on the day  
She grew from girlhood into wisdom gay ;  
And hath laid by her crozier, evermore  
With both hands gathering to enrich her store,  
And make her courts with music ring away.

Love her, for that the world is in her heart,  
Man's rude antiquity and doubtful goal,  
The heaven-enthraling luxury of art,  
The burden'd pleading of his clay-bound soul,  
The mutual office of delight and dole,  
The merry laugh of youth, the joy of life  
Older than thought, and the unamending strife  
'Twixt liberty and politic control.

There is none holier, not the lilied town  
By Arno, whither the spirit of Athens fled,  
Escap't from Hades to a less renown,  
Yet joyful to be risen from the dead ;  
Nor she whose wide imperious arms were spread  
To spoil mankind, until the avenger came  
In darkening storm, and left a ruin'd name,  
A triple crown upon a vanquish't head.

What love in myriad hearts in every clime  
The vision of her beauty calls to pray'r :  
Where at his feet Himâlaya sublime  
Holds up aslope the Arabian floods, or where

## . *Later Poems*

Patriarchal Nile rears at his watery stair;  
In the broad islands of the Antipodes,  
By Esperanza, or in the coral seas  
Where Buddha's vain pagodas throng the air;

Or where the chivalry of Nipon smote  
The wily Muscovite, intent to creep  
Around the world with half his pride afloat,  
And sent his battle to the soundless deep;  
Or with our pilgrim-kin, and them that reap  
The prairie-corn beyond cold Labrador  
To California and the Alaskan shore,  
Her exiled sons their pious memory keep :

Bright memories of young poetic pleasure  
In free companionship, the loving stress  
Of all life-beauty lull'd in studious leisure,  
When every Muse was jocund with excess  
Of fine delight and tremulous happiness;  
The breath of an indolent unbridled June,  
When delicate thought fell from the dreamy moon :  
But now strange care, sorrow, and grief oppress.

*' Ah ! fewer tears shall be,—'tis thus they dream,—  
Ah, fewer, softer tears, when we lie low :  
On younger brows shall brighter laurel gleam :  
Lovelier and earlier shall the rosebuds blow.'*

For in this hope she nurs'd them, and to know  
That Truth, while men regard a tetter'd page,  
Leaps on the mountains, and from age to age  
Reveals the dayspring's inexhausted glow.

Yet all their joy is mingled with regret:  
As the lone scholar on a neighbouring height,  
Brooding disconsolate with eyelids wet  
Ere o'er the unkind world he took his flight,

## Odes

Look'd down upon her festal lamps at night,  
And while the far call of her warning bell  
Reach't to his heart, sang us his fond farewell,  
Beneath the stars thinking of lost delight;

'Farewell! for whether we be young or old,  
Thou dost remain, but we shall pass away:  
Time shall against himself thy house uphold,  
And build thy sanctuary from decay;  
Children unborn shall be thy pride and stay.  
May Earth protect thee, and thy sons be true;  
And God with heavenly food thy life renew,  
Thy pleasure and thy grace from day to day.'

### 17

IN MEMORY OF THE OLD-ETONIANS  
WHOSE LIVES WERE LOST IN THE S. AFRICAN WAR

*An ode set to music by Sir Hubert Parry and performed when  
K. Edward VII inaugurated the Memorial Hall at  
Eton College*

### I

RESOUND! Resound! To jubilant music ring!  
Your birthday trumpets sound the alarm of strenuous days.  
Ye new-built walls, awake! and welcome England's King  
With a high GLORY-TO-GOD, and holy cheer of praise.  
Awake to fairest hope of fames unknown, unseen,  
When ye-too silver and solemn with age shall be:  
For all that is fair upon earth is reared with tend'rest teen,  
As the burden'd years to memory flee.

## Later Poems

### II

Lament, O Muse of the Thames, in pride lament again,  
With low melodious grief remember them in this hour!—  
Beyond your dauntless joy, my brother, was our pain.  
Above all gold, my country, the lavish price of thy power—  
The ancient groves have mourn'd our sons, for whom no more  
The sisterly kisses of life, the loved embraces.  
Remember the love of them who came not home from the war,  
The fatherly tears and the veil'd faces.

### III

Now henceforth their shrine is builded, high and vast,  
Always drawing noble hearts to noble deeds;  
In the toil of glory to be, and the tale of glory past:  
While ever the laughing waves of youth pass over the meads,  
And the tongue of Hellas is heard, and old Time slumbereth  
light  
In the cradle of Peace. O let thy dancing feet  
Roam in our land and abide, dear Peace, thou child of Right,  
Giver of happiness, gentle and sweet.

### 18

## ODE TO MUSIC

WRITTEN FOR THE BICENTENARY COMMEMORATION OF

HENRY PURCELL

*Music composed by Sir Hubert Parry, and performed at the  
Leeds Festival and Commemoration Festival in  
London, 1895*

### I

MYRIAD-VOICED Queen, Enchantress of the air,  
Bride of the life of man! With tuneful reed,  
With string and horn and high-adoring quire  
Thy welcome we prepare.  
In silver-speaking mirrors of desire,

## *Odes*

In joyous ravishment of mystery draw thou near,  
With heavenly echo of thoughts, that dreaming lie  
Chain'd in unborn oblivion drear,  
Thy many-hearted grace restore  
Unto our isle our own to be,  
And make again our Graces three.

### II

Turn, O return ! In merry England  
Foster'd thou wert with infant Liberty.  
Her gloried oaks, that stand  
With trembling leaves and giant heart  
Drinking in beauty from the summer moon,  
Her wild-wood once was dear to thee.

There the birds with tiny art  
Earth's immemorial cradle-tune  
Warble at dawn to fern and fawn,  
In the budding thickets making merry;  
And for their love the primrose faint  
Floods the green shade with youthful scent.

Come, thy jocund spring renew  
By hyacinthine lakes of blue:  
Thy beauty shall enchant the buxom May;  
And all the summer months shall strew thy way,  
And rose and honeysuckle rear  
Their flowery screens, till under fruit and berry  
The tall brake groweth golden with the year.

### III

Thee fair Poetry oft hath sought,  
Wandering lone in wayward thought,  
On level meads by gliding streams,  
When summer noon is full of dreams :  
And thy loved airs her soul invade,  
Haunting retired the willow shade.

## *Later Poems*

Or in some wallèd orchard nook  
She communes with her ancient book,  
Beneath the branches laden low ;  
While the high sun o'er bosom'd snow  
Smiteth all day the long hill-side  
With ripening cornfields waving wide.

There if thou linger all the year,  
No jar of man can reach thine ear,  
Or sweetly comes, as when the sound  
From hidden villages around,  
Threading the woody knolls, is borne  
Of bells that dong the Sabbath morn.

### IV

#### I

The sea with melancholy war  
Moateth about our castled shore ;  
His world-wide elemental moan  
Girdeth our lives with tragic zone.

He, ere men dared his watery path,  
Fenced them aloof in wrath ;  
Their jealous brotherhoods  
Sund'ring with bitter floods :  
Till science grew and skill,  
And their adventurous will  
Challenged his boundaries, and went free  
To know the round world, and the sea  
From midday night to midnight sun  
Binding all nations into one.

#### 2

Yet shall his storm and mastering wave  
Assure the empire to the brave ;

## *Odes*

And to his billowy bass belongs  
The music of our patriot songs,  
When to the wind his ridges go  
In furious following, careering a-row,  
Lasht with hail and withering snow :  
And ever undaunted hearts outride  
His rushing waters wide.

### 3

But when the winds fatigued or fled  
Have left the drooping barks unsped,  
And nothing stirs his idle plain  
Save fire-breathed ships with silvery train,  
While lovingly his waves he layeth,  
And his slow heart in passion swells  
To the pale moon in heav'n that strayeth,  
And all his mighty music deep  
Whispers among the heapèd shells,  
Or in dark caverns lies asleep ;—

Then dreams of Peace invite,  
Haunting our shore with kisses light :  
Nay—even Love's Paphian Queen hath come  
Out of her long retirèd home  
To show again her beauty bright ;  
And twice or thrice in sight hath play'd  
Of a young lover unaffray'd,  
And all his verse immortal made.

### V

#### I

Love to Love calleth,  
Love unto Love replieth :  
From the ends of the earth, drawn by invisible bands,  
Over the dawning and darkening lands  
Love cometh to Love.

## *Later Poems*

To the pangs of desire ;  
To the heart by courage and might  
Escaped from hell,  
From the torment of raging fire,  
From the sighs of the drowning main,  
From shipwreck of fear and pain,  
From the terror of night.

### 2

All mankind by Love shall be banded  
To combat Evil, the many-handed :  
For the spirit of man on beauty feedeth,  
The airy fancy he heedeth,  
He regardeth Truth in the heavenly height,  
In changeful pavilions of loveliness dight,  
The sovran sun that knows not the night ;  
He loveth the beauty of earth,  
And the sweet birds' mirth ;  
And out of his heart there falleth  
A melody-making river  
Of passion, that runneth ever  
To the ends of the earth and crieth,  
That yearneth and calleth ;  
And Love from the heart of man  
To the heart of man replieth :  
    On the wings of desire  
    Love cometh to Love.

## VI

### I

To me, to me, fair hearted Goddess, come,  
    To Sorrow come,  
Where by the grave I linger dumb ;  
    With sorrow bow thine head,  
    For all my beauty is dead,



## *Odes*

Leave Freedom's vaunt and playful thought awhile,  
Come with thine unimpassioned smile  
Of heavenly peace. and with thy fourfold choir  
    Of fair uncloying harmony  
Unveil the palaces where man's desire  
Keepeth celestial solemnity.

### 2

Lament, fair hearted queen, lament with me :  
For when thy seer died no song was sung,  
Nor for our heroes fal'n by land or sea  
    Hath honour found a tongue :  
Nor aught of beauty for their tomb can frame  
    Worthy their noble name.  
Let Mirth go bare : make mute thy dancing string :  
With thy majestic consolation  
Sweeten our suffering.  
Speak thou my woe ; that from her pain  
My spirit arise to see again  
The Truth unknown that keeps our faith,  
The Beauty unseen that bates our breath,  
The heaven that doth our joy renew,  
And drinketh up our tears as dew.

## VII

### DIRGE

Man born of desire  
Cometh out of the night,  
A wandering spark of fire,  
A lonely word of eternal thought  
Echoing in chance and forgot.

### I

He seeth the sun,  
He calleth the stars by name,

## *Later Poems*

He saluteth the flowers.—  
Wonders of land and sea,  
The mountain towers  
Of ice and air  
He seeth, and calleth them fair :  
Then he hideth his face ;—  
Whence he came to pass away  
Where all is forgot,  
Unmade—lost for aye  
With the things that are not.

### 2

He striveth to know,  
To unravel the Mind  
That veileth in horror :  
He wills to adore.  
In wisdom he walketh  
And loveth his kind ;  
His labouring breath  
Would keep evermore :  
Then he hideth his face ;—  
Whence he came to pass away  
Where all is forgot,  
Unmade—lost for aye  
With the things that are not.

### 3

He dreameth of beauty,  
He seeks to create  
Fairer and fairer  
To vanquish his Fate ;  
No hindrance he—  
No curse will brook,  
He maketh a law  
No ill shall be :

## *Odes*

Then he hideth his face ;—  
Whence he came to pass away  
Where all is forgot,  
Unmade—lost for aye  
With the things that are not.

### VIII

Rejoice, ye dead, where'er your spirits dwell,  
Rejoice that yet on earth your fame is bright,  
And that your names, remember'd day and night,  
Live on the lips of those who love you well.

'Tis ye that conquer'd have the powers of Heli  
Each with the special grace of your delight;  
Ye are the world's creators, and by might  
Alone of Heavenly love ye did excel.

Now ye are starry names  
Behind the sun ye climb  
To light the glooms of Time  
With deathless flames.

### IX

Open for me the gates of delight,  
The gates of the garden of man's desire;  
Where spirits touch'd by heavenly fire

Have planted the trees of life.—  
Their branches in beauty are spread,  
Their fruit divine  
To the nations is given for bread,  
And crush'd into wine.

To thee, O man, the sun his truth hath given,  
The moon hath whisper'd in love her silvery dreams;  
Night hath unlockt the starry heaven,  
The sea the trust of his streams:

## *Later Poems*

And the rapture of woodland spring  
Is stay'd in its flying;  
And Death cannot sting  
Its beauty undying.

Fear and Pity disentwine  
Their aching beams in colours fine;  
Pain and woe forgo their might.  
After darkness thy leaping sight,  
After dumbness thy dancing sound,  
After fainting thy heavenly flight,  
After sorrow thy pleasure crown'd:  
O enter the garden of thy delight,  
Thy solace is found.

### X

To us, O Queen of sinless grace,  
Now at our prayer unveil thy face:  
Awake again thy beauty free;  
Return and make our Graces three.  
And with our thronging strength to the ends of the earth  
Thy myriad-voicèd loveliness go forth,  
To lead o'er all the world's wide ways  
God's everlasting praise,  
And every heart inspire  
With the joy of man in the beauty of Love's desire.

# Odes

19

## A HYMN OF NATURE

AN ODE WRITTEN FOR MUSIC

*The music composed by Sir Hubert Parry, performed at  
the Gloucester Festival, 1898*

### I

POWER eternal, power unknown, uncreate :  
Force of force, fate of fate.

Beauty and light are thy seeing,  
Wisdom and right thy decreeing,  
Life of life is thy being.

In the smile of thine infinite starry gleam,  
Without beginning or end,  
Measure or number,  
Beyond time and space,  
Without foe or friend,  
In the void of thy formless embrace,  
All things pass as a dream  
Of thine unbroken slumber.

### II

Gloom and the night are thine:  
On the face of thy mirror darkness and terror,  
The smoke of thy blood, the frost of thy breath.

In silence and woful awe  
Thy harrying angels of death  
Destroy whate'er thou makest—  
Makest, destroyest, destroyest and makest.  
Thy gems of life thou dost squander,

## *Later Poems*

Their virginal beauty givest to plunder,  
Doomest to uttermost regions of age-long ice  
    To starve and expire:  
    Consumest with glance of fire,  
    Or back to confusion shakest  
With earthquake, elemental storm and thunder.

### III

In ways of beauty and peace  
Fair desire, companion of man,  
Leadeth the children of earth.

As when the storm doth cease,  
The loving sun the clouds dispelleth,  
And woodland walks are sweet in spring;  
    The birds they merrily sing  
    And every flower-bud swelleth.  
Or where the heav'ns o'erspan  
    The lonely downs  
    When summer is high:  
    Below their breezy crowns  
    And grassy steep  
Spreadeth the infinite smile of the sunlit sea;  
    Whereon the white ships swim,  
    And steal to havens far  
    Across the horizon dim,  
Or lie becalm'd upon the windless deep,  
    Like thoughts of beauty and peace,  
    When the storm doth cease,  
And fair desire, companion of man,  
    Leadeth the children of earth.

### IV

Man, born to toil, in his labour rejoiceth;  
His voice is heard in the morn:

## *Odes*

He armeth his hand and sallieth forth  
To engage with the generous teeming earth,  
And drinks from the rocky rills  
The laughter of life.

Or else, in crowded cities gathering close,  
He traffics morn and eve  
In thronging market-halls;  
Or within echoing walls  
Of busy arsenals

Weldeth the stubborn iron to engines vast;  
Or tends the thousand looms  
Where, with black smoke o'ercast,  
The land mourns in deep glooms.

Life is toil, and life is good:  
There in loving brotherhood  
Beateth the nation's heart of fire.  
Strife! Strife! The strife is strong!

There battle thought and voice, and spirits conspire  
In joyous dance around the tree of life,  
And from the ringing choir  
Riseth the praise of God from hearts in tuneful song.

### V

Hark! What spirit doth entreat  
The love-obedient air?  
All the pomp of his delight  
Revels on the ravisht night,  
Wandering wilful, soaring fair:  
There! 'Tis there, 'tis there.  
Like a flower of primal fire  
Late redeem'd by man's desire.

Away, on wings away  
My spirit far hath flown,

## *Later Poems*

To a land of love and peace,  
Of beauty unknown.  
The world that earth-born man,  
By evil undismay'd,  
Out of the breath of God  
Hath for his heaven made.

Where all his dreams soe'er  
Of holy things and fair  
In splendour are upgrown,  
Which thro' the toilsome years  
Martyrs and faithful seers  
And poets with holy tears  
Of hope have sown.

There, beyond power of ill,  
In joy and blessing crown'd,  
Christ with His lamp of truth  
Sitteth upon the hill  
Of everlasting youth,  
And calls His saints around.

### VI

Sweet compassionate tears  
Have dimm'd my earthly sight,  
Tears of love, the showers wherewith  
The eternal morn is bright:  
Dews of the heav'nly spheres.  
With tears my eyes are wet,  
Tears not of vain regret,  
Tears of no lost delight,  
Dews of the heav'nly spheres  
Have dimm'd my earthly sight,  
Sweet compassionate tears



# *Odes*

## VII

Gird on thy sword, O man, thy strength endue,  
In fair desire thine earth-born joy renew.  
Live thou thy life beneath the making sun  
Till Beauty, Truth, and Love in thee are one.

Thro' thousand ages hath thy childhood run:  
On timeless ruin hath thy glory been:  
From the forgotten night of loves fordone  
Thou risest in the dawn of hopes unseen.

Higher and higher shall thy thoughts aspire,  
Unto the stars of heaven, and pass away,  
And earth renew the buds of thy desire  
In fleeting blooms of everlasting day.

Thy work with beauty crown, thy life with love;  
Thy mind with truth uplift to God above:  
For whom all is, from whom was all begun,  
In whom all Beauty, Truth, and Love are one.



POEMS  
IN  
CLASSICAL PROSODY



PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS

- Ep. I. Daniel Press. 1903.*  
,, *II. Monthly Review. July, 1903, with  
an abstract of Stone's Prosody, as  
there used.*  
*No. 3. Printed by C. H. Daniel. 1903.*  
,, *8. In 'Pelican,' C.C.C., Oxford.*  
,, *9. English Review. March, 1912.*  
,, *21. New Quarterly. Jan. 1909, with  
an essay on the Virgilian Hexame-  
ter, &c.*

THESE experiments in quantitative verse were made in fulfilment of a promise to William Johnson Stone that I would some day test his theory. His premature death converted my consent into a serious obligation. This personal explanation is due to myself for two reasons : because I might otherwise appear firstly as an advocate of the system, secondly as responsible for Stone's determination of the lengths of English syllables. Before writing quantitative verse it is necessary to learn to *think* in quantities. This is no light task, and a beginner requires fixed rules. Except for a few minor details, which I had disputed with Mr. Stone, I was bound to take his rules as he had elaborated them ; and it was not until I had made some progress and could think fairly well in his prosody that I seriously criticized it. The two chief errors that I find in it are that he relied too much on the quality of a vowel in determining its syllabic length, and that he regarded the *h* as *always* consonantal in quality. His valuation of the *er* sound is doubtful, but defensible and convenient, and I have never discarded it. My earlier experiments contain therefore a good many 'false quantities', and these, where they could not be very easily (though *inconsistently*) amended, I have left, and marked most of them in the text : a few false quantities do not make a poem less readable. Thus a long mark over a syllable means that Stone reckoned it as long, and that the verse requires it to be so pronounced, but that I regard it as short, or at least as *doubtful*. For example on p. 414 *Rūin* is thus written. Of all accented long vowels in 'open' position the long *u* seems perhaps to retain its quantity best, but there is evidence that Tennyson held it to be shortened, and I do not know whether it might be an exception or go with *theory*, *piety*, *pöetry*, &c. Again, where a final syllable should be lengthened or not shortened by position, but lacks its consonantal support, I have put a *˘* in the gap : these weak places are chiefly due to my accepting Stone's unchanging valuation of *h*. My emancipation from Stone's rules was gradual, so that I have not been able to distinguish definitely my earlier experiments from the later, in which the quantities are such as I have now come to approve of : but my line-for-line paraphrase of Virgil is such a later experiment. It was accompanied in the *New Quarterly* by a long examination of the Virgilian hexameter, to which I would refer any one who is interested in the subject. In these English hexameters I have used and advocate the use of Miltonic elision. The mark *'* in the text shows where I have purposely allowed a short syllable to sustain a long place. Though the difficulty of adapting our English syllables to the Greek rules is very great, and even deterrent—for I cannot pretend to have attained to an absolutely consistent scheme—yet the experiments that I have made reveal a vast unexplored field of delicate and expressive rhythms hitherto unknown in our poetry : and this amply rewarded me for my friendly undertaking.

## I

## EPISTLE I

TO L. M.

## WINTRY DELIGHTS

Now in wintry delights, and long fireside meditation,  
 'Twixt studies and routine paying due court to the Muses,  
 My solace in solitude, when broken roads barricade me  
 Mudbound, unvisited for months with my merry children,  
 Grateful t'ward Providence, and heeding a slander against me  
 Less than a rheum, think of me to-day, dear Lionel, and take  
 This letter as some account of Will Stone's versification.

We, whose first memories reach half of a century backward,  
 May praise our fortune to have outliv'd so many dangers,—  
 Faultiness of Nature's unruly machinery or man's— ; 10  
 For, once born, whatever 'tis worth, LIFE is to be held to,  
 Its mere persistence esteem'd as rēal attainment,  
 Its crown of silver reverenc'd as one promise of youth  
 Fruiting, of existence one needful purpose accomplish'd:  
 And 'twere worth the living, howe'er unkindly bereft of  
 Those joys and comforts, throu' which we chiefly regard it:  
 Nay,—set aside the pleasant unhinder'd order of our life,  
 Our happy enchantments of Fortune, easy surroundings,  
 Courteous acquaintance, dwelling in fair homes, the delight of  
 Long-plann'd excursions, the romance of journeying in lands  
 Historic, of sēeing their glory, the famous adornments 21  
 Giv'n to memorial Earth by man, decorator of all-time,  
 (—As wē saw with virginal eyes travelling to behold them,—)  
 Her gorgeous palaces, 'her tow'rs and stately cathedrals ;  
 Where the turrets and domes of pictured Tuscany slumber,

## Poems in

Or the havoc'd splendours of Rome imperial, or where  
Glare the fretted minarets and mosks of trespassing Islam,  
And old Nilus, amid the mummied suzerainty of Egypt,  
Glideth, a godly presence, consciously regardless of all things,  
Save his unending toil and eternal recollections :— 30

Set these out of account, and with them too put away ART,  
Those ravishings of mind, those sensuous intelligences,  
By whose grace the elect enjoy their sacred aloofness  
From Life's meagre affairs, in beauty's regenerate youth  
Reading immortality's sublime revelation, adoring  
Their own heav'nly desire ; nor alone in worship assist they,  
But take, call'd of God, part and pleasure in crëation  
Of that beauty, the first of His first purposes extoll'd :—

Yea, set aside with these all NATURE's beauty, the wildwood's  
Flow'ry domain, the flushing, soft-crowding loveliness of  
Spring, 40

Lazy Summer's burning dial, the serenely solemn spells  
Of Sibylline Autumn, with gay-wing'd Plenty departing ;  
All fair change, whether of seasons or bright recurrent day,  
Morning or eve ; the divine night's wonderous empyrean ;  
High noon's melting azure, his thin cloud-country, the  
landscape

Mountainous or maritime, blue calms of midsummer Ocean,  
Broad corn-grown champaign gold-waving in invisible wind,  
Wide-water'd pasture, with shade of whispering aspen ;  
All whereby Nature winneth our love, fondly appearing  
As to caress her children, or all that in exaltation 50  
Lifteth aloft our hearts to an unseen glory beyond her :—

Put these out of account ; yea, more I say, banish also  
From the credit sum of enjoyment those simple AFFECTIONS,  
Whose common exercise informs our natural instinct ;  
That, set in our animal flesh-fabric, of our very lifeblood  
Draw their subsistence, and even in ungenerous hearts

## *Classical Prosody*

Root, like plants in stony deserts and 'neath pitiless snows.  
Yea, put away all LOVE, the blessings and pieties of home,  
All delicate heart-bonds, vital tendernesses untold,  
Joys that fear to be named, feelings too holy to gaze on ; 60  
And with his inviolate peace-triumph his passionate war  
Be forgone, his mighty desire, thrilling ecstasies, ardours  
Of mystic reverence, his fierce flame-eager emotions,  
Idoltrous service, blind faith and ritual of fire.

If from us all these things were taken away, (that is all art  
And all beauty whate'er, and all love's varied affection,)  
Yet would enough subsist in other concerns to suffice us,  
And feed intelligence, and make life's justification.  
What this is, if you should ask me, beyond or above the  
rejoicing

In vegetant or brute existence, answer is easy; 70  
'Tis the reflective effort of mind that, conscious of itself,  
Fares forth exploring nature for principle and cause,  
Keenly with all the cunning pleasure and instinct of a hunter,  
Who, in craft fashioning weapon and sly snare, tracketh after  
His prey flying afield, and that which his arm killeth eateth.

History and SCIENCE our playthings are : what an untold  
Wealth of inexhaustive treasure is stored up for amusement !  
Shall the amass'd Earth-structure appeal to me less than in  
early

Childhood an old fives-ball, whose wraps I wondering  
unwound,

Untwining the ravel'd worsted, that mere rubbish and waste  
Of leather and shavings had bound and moulded elastic 81  
Into a perfect sphere ? Shall not the celestial earth-ball  
Equally entertain a mature enquiry, reward our  
Examination of its contexture, conglomerated  
Of layer'd débris, the erosion of infinite ages ?  
Tho' I lack the wizard Darwin's scientific insight  
On the barren sea-beaches of East Patagonia gazing,

## Poems in

I must wond'ring attend, nay learn myself to decipher  
Time's rich hīeroglyph, with vast elemental pencil  
Scor'd upon Earth's rocky crust,—minute shells slowly  
collecting 90  
Press'd to a stone, uprais'd to a mountain, again to a fine sand  
Worn, burying the remains of an alien organic epoch,  
In the flat accretions of new sedimentary strata;  
All to be crush'd, crumpled, confused, contorted, abandon'd,  
Broke, as a child's puzzle is, to be recompos'd with attention;  
Nature's history-book, which shē hath torn as asham'd of;  
And lest those pictures on<sup>v</sup>her fragmentary pages  
Should too lightly reveal frustrate Antiquity, hath laid  
Rūin upon rūin, revolution upon revolution:  
Yet no single atom, no least insignificant grain 100  
But, having order alike of fate, and faulty disorder,  
Holds a record of Time, very vestiges of the Creation;  
Which who will not attend scorns blindly the only com-  
mandments  
By God's finger of old inscribed on table of earth-stone.

'This for me wer' enough: yet confin'd Gēology's field  
Counts not in all Science more than the planet to the Cosmos;  
Where our central Sun, almighty material author,  
And sustainer, appears as a half-consumed vanishing spark,  
Bearing along with it, entangled in immensity's onward  
Spiral eddies, the blacken'd dust-motes whirl'd off from  
around it. 110

But tho' man's microscopical functions measure all things  
By his small footprints, finger-spans and ticking of clocks,  
And thereby conceive the immense—such multiple extent  
As to defy Idēas of imperative cerebration,—  
None the less observing, measuring, patiently recording,  
Hē mappeth out the utter wilderness of unlimited space;  
Carefully weigheth a weight to the sun, reckoneth for it its  
path  
Of trackless travelling, the precise momentary places



## Classical Prosody

Of the planets and their satellites, their annual orbits,  
Times, perturbations of times, and orbit of orbit. 120

What was Alexander's subduing of Asia, or that  
Sheep-worry of Europe, when pigmy Napoleon enter'd  
Her sovereign chambers, and her kings with terror eclips'd?  
His footsore soldiers inciting across the ravag'd plains,  
Thro' bloody fields of death tramping to an ugly disaster?  
Shows any crown, set above the promise (so rudely accom-  
plisht)

Of their fair godlike young faces, a glory to compare  
With the immortal olive that circles bold Galileo's  
Brows, the laurel'd halo of Newton's unwithering fame? 129  
Or what a child's surmise, how trifling a journey Columbus  
Adventur'd, to a land like that which he sail'd from arriving,  
If compar'd to Bessel's magic divination, awarding  
Magnificent Sirius his dark and invisible bride;  
Or when Adams by Cam, (more nearly Leverrier in France,)  
From the minutely measur'd vacillation of Uranus, augur'd  
Where his mighty brother Neptune went wandering unnamed,  
And thro' those thousand-million league-darknesses of space  
Drew him slowly whene'er he pass'd, and slowly released  
him!

*Nil admirari!* 'Tis surely a most shabby thinker 139  
Who, looking on Nature, finds not the reflection appalling

And if these wonders we must with wonder abandon,  
Astronomy's Cosmos, the Immense, and those physical laws  
That link mind to matter, laws mutual in revelation,  
Which measure and analyse Nature's primordial orgasm,  
Lifegiving omnipotential LIGHT, its speed to determine,  
Untwist its rainbow of various earthcoloring rays,  
Counting strictly to each its own millionth-millimetred  
Wave-length, and mapping out on fray'd diffraction of ether  
All the adust elements and furnaced alchemy of heav'n;  
Laws which atone the disorder of infinit observation 150  
With tyrannous numbers and abstract thëory, closing

## Poems in

Protean Nature with nets of principle exact ;  
Her metamorphoses transmuting by correlation,  
All heat, all chemical concourse or electrical action,  
All force and all motion of all matter, or subtle or gross :—

If we these wonders, I say, with wonder abandon,  
Nor can for mental heaviness their high study pursue,  
Yet no story of adventures or fabulous exploit  
Of famous'd heroes hath so rōmantic a discourse,  
As these growing annals of long heav'n-scaling achievement  
And far discoveries, which he who'idly neglecteth 161  
Is but a boor as truly ridiculous as the village clown,  
In whose thought the pleasant sun-ball performeth a circuit  
Daily above mother earth, and resteth nightly beneath her.

Nor will a man, whose mind respects its own operations,  
Lightly resign himself to remain in darkness uninform'd,  
While any true science of fact lies easy within reach  
Concerning Nature's ēternal essential object,  
Self-matter, embodying substratum of ev'ry relation  
Both of Time and Space, at once the machinery and stuff  
Of those Idēas ; carrier, giver, only receiver 171  
Of such perceptions as arise in sensible organs.

Now whether each element is a cōherency of equal  
Strictly symmetric atoms, or among themselves the atoms are  
Like animals in a herd, having each an identity distinct,  
—So that atoms of gold compar'd with sulphur or iron  
Are but as ancient Greeks compar'd with Chinamen and  
Turks ;—

Nor whether all elements are untransmutable offspring  
From one kind or more thro' endless eternity changing,  
Or whether invisibles claim rightly the name of immortals,  
I make no'enquiry ; matter minutely divided 181  
Showing a like paradox, with ever-continuous extent,  
And, as Adam, the atom will pose as a naked assumption :—  
But since all the knowledge which man was born to attain to  
Hath these only channels, (which must limit and qualify'it,)

## Classical Prosody

We shall con the grammar, the material alphabet of life,  
Yea, ev'n more from error to preserve our inquisitive mind,  
Than to secure well-bēing against adversity and ill.  
Surely if all is a flux, 'tis well to look into the flūid,  
Inspect and question the apparent, shifty behaviour, 190  
Wherein lurketh alone our witness of all physical law,  
As we read the habits unchanging of invisible things,  
Their timeless chronicles, the unintelligent ethic of dust:  
In which dense labyrinth he who was guiding avised me,  
With caution saying 'Were this globe's area of land  
'Wholly cover'd from sight, pack'd close to the watery  
margins  
'With mere empty vessels, I could myself put in each one  
'Some different substance, and write its formula thereon.'

Thus would speak the chemist; and Nature's superabun-  
dance,  
Her vast infinitude of waste vāriety untold, 200  
As<sup>h</sup>er immense extent and inconceivable object,  
Squandering activities throughout ēternity, dwarfeth  
Man's little aim and hour, his doubtful fancy: what are we?  
Our petty selfseekings, our speedily passing affections?  
Life having existed so extravagantly before us;  
Earth bearing so slight a regard or care for us; and all  
After us unconcern'd to remain, strange, beautiful as now.  
May not an idle echo<sup>v</sup>of an antique pōetry haunt me,  
'Friendship is all feigning, yea<sup>v</sup>all loving is folly only'?  
—Yet doth not very mention of antique pōetry and love 210  
Quickly recall to better motions my dispirited faith?  
And I see man's discontent as witness asserting  
His moral idēal, that, born of Nature, is heir to  
Her children's titles, which nought may cancel or impugn;  
Not wer' of all her works man least, but ranking among them  
Highly or ev'n as best, he wrongs himself to imagine  
His soul foe to her aim, or from<sup>v</sup>her sanction an outlaw.

## Poems in

Nay, but just as man should appear more fully accordant  
With things not himself, would they rank with him as equals:  
Judging other creatures he sets them wholly beneath him;  
His disquiet among manifold and alien objects 221  
Being sure evidence, the effect of an understanding,  
And perception allow'd by Nature solely to himself.

Highly then is to be prais'd the resourceful wisdom of  
our time,  
That spunged out the written science and theories of life,  
And, laying foundation of its knowledge in physical law,  
Gave it preëminence o'er all enquiry, erecting  
Superstructive of all, bringing ev'ry research to the object,  
Boldly a new science of MAN, from dreamy scholastic  
Imprisoning set free, and inveterate divination, 230  
Into the light of truth, to the touch of history and fact.

Since 'the proper study of mankind is man',—nor afore-  
time

Was the proverb esteem'd as a truism less than it is now,—  
'Tis strange that the method lay out of sight unaccomplisht,  
And that we, so late to arrive, should first set a value  
On the delusive efforts of human babyhood; and so  
Witnessing impatiently the rear of their disappearance,  
Upgathering the relics and vestiges of primitive man,  
Should ratify instinct for science, look to the darkness  
For light, find a knowledge where 'twas most groping or un-  
known: 240

While civilization's advances mutely regarding  
Talk we of old scapegoats, discuss bloodrites, immolations,  
Worship of ancestors; explain complexities involved  
Of tribal marriages, derivation of early religions,  
Priestly taboos, totems, archaic mysteries of trees,  
All the devils and dreams abhorr'd of barbarous ages.

And 'tis a far escape from wires, wheels and penny papers  
And the worried congestion of our Victorian era,

## Classical Prosody

Whose many inventions of world-wide luxury have changed  
Life's very face :—but enough wē hear of progress, enough  
have 250

Our conscious science and comforts trumpeted ; altho'  
Hardly can I, who so many years eagerly frequented  
Bartholomew's fountain, not speak of things to awaken  
Kind old HIPPOCRATES, howe'er hē slumbereth, entomb'd  
'Neath the shatter'd winejars and ruined factories of Cos,  
Or where hē wander'd in Thessalian Larissa :  
For when his doctrine, which Rome had wisely adopted,  
Sank lost with the treasures of her deep-foundering empire,  
No art or science grew so contemptible, order'd 259  
So by mere folly, windy caprice, superstition and chance,  
As boastful MEDICINE, with humours fit for a madhouse,  
Save when some Sydenham, like Samson among the Philis-  
tines,

Strode bond-bursting along with a smile of genial instinct.  
Nor when here and there some ray, in darkness arising,  
Hopefully seem'd to herald the coming dawn, (as when a  
Laennec

Or Jenner invented his meed of worthy remembrance,)  
Did one mind foresee, one seer foretell the appearance  
Of that unexpected daylight that arose upon our time.

Who dream'd that living air poison'd our SURGERY, coating  
All our sheeny weapons with germs of an invisible death, 270  
Till he saw the sterile steel work with immunity, and save  
Quickly as its warring scimitars of victory had slain ?  
Saw what school-tradition for nature's kind method admir'd,  
—In those lifedrainng slow cures and bedridden agues,—  
Forgotten, or condemn'd as want of care in a surgeon ?

Tho' MEDICINE makes not so plain an appeal to the vulgar,  
Yet she lags not a whit : her pregnant theory touches  
Deeper discoveries, her more complete revolution  
Gives promise of wider benefits in larger abundance.

Where she nam'd the disease she now separates the  
bacillus; 280

## Poems in

Sets the atoms of offence, those blind and sickly bloodeaters,  
'Neath lens and daylight, forcing their foul propagations,  
Which had ever prosper'd in dark impunity unquest,  
Now to behave in sight, deliver their poisonous extract  
And their strange self-brew'd, self-slaying juice to be handled,  
Experimented upon, set aside and stor'd to oppose them.

So novel and obscure a research, such hard revelations  
Of Nature's cabinet,—tho' with fact amply accordant,  
And by hypothesis much dark difficulty resolving,  
Are not quickly receiv'd nor approv'd, and sensitive idlers,  
Venturing in the profound terrible penetralia of life, 291  
Are shock'd by a method that shuns not contamination  
With cruel Nature's most secret processes unmaskt.  
And yet in all mankind's disappointed history, now first  
Have his scouts push'd surely within his foul enemies' lines,  
And his sharpshooters descried their insidious foe,  
Those swarming parasites, that barely within the detection  
Of manifold search-light, have bred, swimming unsuspected  
Thro' man's brain and limbs, slaying with loathly pollution  
His beauty's children, his sweet scions of affection, 300  
In fev'rous torment and tears, his home desolating  
Of their fair innocence, breaking his proud passionate heart,  
And his kindly belief in God's good justice arraigning.

With what wildly directed attack, what an armory illjudged,  
Has he, (alas, poor man,) with what cumbrous machination  
Sought to defend himself from their Lilliputian onslaught;  
Aye discharging around him, in obscure night, at a venture,  
Ev'ry missile which his despair confus'dly imagin'd;  
His simples, compounds, specifics, chemical therapeutics,  
Juice of plants, whatever was nam'd in lordly Salerno's 310  
Herbaries and gardens, vipers, snails, all animal filth,  
Incredible quackeries, the pretentious jugglery of knaves,  
Green electricities, saints' bones and priestly anointings.  
Fools! that oppose his one scientific intelligent hope!  
Grant us an hundred years, and man shall hold in abeyance  
These foul distempers, and with this world's benefactors



## Classical Prosody

Shall PASTEUR obtain the reward of saintly devotion,  
His crown hēroic, who fought not destiny in vain.

'Tis success that attracts : 'twas therefore so many workers  
Ran pellmell to the schools of Nature in our generation, 320  
While other employments have lack'd their genius and pined.  
Our fathers' likings wē thought semibarbarous, our art  
Self-consciously sickens in qualms of an æsthetic aura,  
Noisily in the shallows splashing and disporting uninspir'd.  
Our famed vulgarities whether in speech, taste or amusement,  
Are not amended: Is it foolish, hoping for a rescue,  
First to appeal to the strong, for health to the healthy  
amongst us?

—For the Sophists' doctrine that GRACE is dýing of old age  
I hold in derision, their inkpot thēories of man,  
Of his cradle of art, his deathbed of algebra ;—and see 330  
How Scīence has wrought, since we went idling at Eton,  
One thing above surmise :—An' if I may dare to remind you  
How Vergil praises your lov'd Lucretius, (of whom  
My matter and metre<sup>v</sup> have set you thinking, as I fear,)  
In that glory which ends 'et inexorabile fatum  
Subjecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis avari':  
Sounded not most empty to us such boast of a pagan,  
Strangely to us tutor'd to believe, with faith mediæval,  
Torture everlasting to be justly the portion of all souls,  
Nor but by the elects' secret prēdestiny escaped? 340  
If you think to reply,—making this question in answer,—  
'Did the belief disturb for a moment our pleasure in life?'  
No.—And men gather in harvest on slopes of an active  
Volcano: natheless the terror's ēnormity was there ;  
Now 'tis away: Scīence has pierced man's cloudy common-  
sense,

Dow'd his homely vision with more expansive an embrace,  
And the rotten foundation of old superstition exposed.  
That trouble of Pascal, those vain paradoxes of Austin,  
Those Semitic parables of Paul, those tomes of Aquinas,

## Poems in

All are thrown to the limbo of antediluvian idols, 350  
Only because we learn mankind's true history, and know  
That not at all from a high perfection sinfully man fell,  
But from baseness arose : We have with sympathy enter'd  
Those dark caves, his joyless abodes, where with ravening  
brutes,

Bear or filthy hyena, he once disputed a shelter :—  
That was his Paradise, his garden of Eden,—abandon'd  
Ages since to the drift and drip, the cementing accretions  
Whence we now separate his bones buried in the stalagma,  
His household makeshifts, his hunting tools, his adornments,  
From the scatter'd skeletons of a lost prehistoric order, 360  
Its mammoth and woolly rhinoceros, the machairodos, and  
beasts

Whose unnamed pastures the immense Atlantic inundates.

In what corner of earth lie not dispersed the familiar  
Flinty relics of his old primitive stone-cutlery ? what child  
Kens not now the design, the adapted structure of each one  
Of those hand-labor'd chert-flakes, whether axe, chisel, or  
knife,

Spearhead, barb of arrow, rough plane or rudely serrate saw ?  
Stones that in our grandsires' time told no sermon, (awaiting  
Indestructible, unnumber'd, on chary attention,)  
From their preadamite pulpits now cry Revelation. 370

Not to a Greek his chanted epic had mortal allurements,  
Conjuring old-world fancies of Ilium and of Olympus,  
As this story to me, this tale primæval of unsung,  
Unwritten, ancestral fate and adversity, this siege  
Of courage and happiness protracted so many thousand  
Thousand years in a slow persistent victory of brain  
And right hand o'er all the venom'd stings, sharpnesses of  
fang

And dread fury whate'er Nature, tirelessly devising,  
Could develop with tooth, claw, tusk, or horn to oppose them.  
See now Herakles, who strangled snakes when an infant 380  
In his cradle alone ; and nought but those petty stonechips



## *Classical Prosody*

For the battle : 'twas wonder above wonders his achievement :  
Yea, and since he thought as a child 'twas natural in<sup>v</sup>him,  
Meeting in existence with purposes antagonistic,  
Circumstances oppos'd to desire, vast activities, which  
Thwarted effort, to assume All-might as spiteful against him.  
Nay, as an artist born, impell'd to devise a religion,—  
So to relate himself idēally with the immortal,—  
This quarrel of reason with what displeas'd his affections  
Was not amiss. The desire and love of beauty possess man :  
Art is of all that beauty the best outwardly presented ; 391  
Truth to the soul is merely the best that mind can imagine.  
No lover ēternal will hold to an older opinion  
If but lovelier ideas, with Nature agrēeing,  
Are to his understanding offer'd... But enough : 'tis an unsolv'd  
Mystery.—Yet man dreams to flatter<sup>v</sup>his dēity saying  
'Beautiful is Nature !' rather 'tis various, endless,  
And her efforts fertile in error tho' grand in attainment.  
If wé, while praising<sup>v</sup>her scheme and infinite order,  
Are compell'd to select, our choice condemns the remainder ;  
Nor can wisdom honour those loathly polluting offences, 401  
Whose very names to the Muse are either accursèd or  
unknown.

Nay, if such foul things thou deemest worthy, the fault was  
Making us, O Nature, thy judge and tearful accuser.

Turn our thought for awhile to the symphonies of  
Beethoven,  
Or the rever'd preludes of mighty Sebastian ; Is there  
One work of Nature's contrivance beautiful as these ?  
Judg'd by beauty alone man wins, as sensuous artist ;  
And for other qualities, the spirit's differentia, Nature  
Scarce observes them at all : that keen unfaltering insight, 410  
Whereby<sup>v</sup>earthly desire's roaming wildernesses are changed  
Into a garden a-bloom ; its wandering impossible ways  
Into pillar'd avenues, alleys and fair-flow'ry terrac'd walks,  
(Where GOD talks with man, as once 'twas fancied of Eden ;)   
That transcendental supreme interpreting of sense,

## Poems in

Rendering intelligence passionate with mystery, linking  
Sympathy with grandeur, the reserve of dignity with play;  
Those soul-formalities, the balance held 'twixt the denial  
And the betrayal of intention, whose masteries invite,  
Entice, welcome ever, meet, and with kindness embrace; 420  
Those guarded floodgates of boundless, lovely resources,  
Whence nothing ill issues, no distraction nor abortion  
Hindering enjoyment, but in easy security flow forth  
Ecstasies of fitness, raptures and harmonies of heav'n.  
Surely before such work of man, so kindly attemper'd,  
Nature must be asham'd, had shē not this ready answer,  
'Fool, and who made thee?'—

I shall not seem a deserter,  
Where in an idle essay my verse to a fancy abandon'd  
Praiseth others : rather while art and beauty delight us,  
While hope, faith and love are warm and lively in our hearts,  
Sweet our earthly desire and dear our human affection, 431  
We may, joyfully despising the pedantries of old age,  
Hold to the time, nor lose the delight of mortal attainment;  
Keenly rejoicing in all that wisdom approves, nor allowing  
Ourselves at the challenge of younger craft to be outsailed;  
But trimming our old canvas in all change of weather and  
wind,  
Freely without fear urge o'erseas our good vessel onward,  
Piloting into the far, unmapp'd futurity.—Farewell.

# *Classical Prosody*

2

## EPISTLE II

### TO A SOCIALIST IN LONDON

No<sup>v</sup>ethical system, no contemplation or action,  
No reason'd attitude of mind nor principle of faith,  
Neither Sōcratical wisdom nor saintly devotion,  
Buildeth a fortress against heart-ache & compassionate grief,  
Nor responds to desire, nor with true mastery yieldeth  
Easy repose to the mind ; And since all our study endeth  
Emptily in full doubt,—fathoming the divine intention  
In this one thing alone, that, howsoē'er it affect us,  
'Twas never intended for mortal fancy to compass,—  
I<sup>v</sup>have concluded that from first purposes unknown 10  
None should seek to deduce idēal laws to be liv'd by ;  
And, loving art, am true to the Muse, & pōetry extol :  
Therefore 'twas that afore I prais'd & heartily enjoy'd  
Your human verses, FRASER, when nobody bought them,  
More than again I praise those serious exhortations,  
Wherewith you wu'd amend the degraded people about you.  
Nay tho' like a prophet with heav'n-sent dignity inspir'd,  
With ready convincement and stern example assuring,  
Mightily you proclaim your love-messag' in the assembly,  
Exhibiting panacēas of ancient ill, propagating 20  
Out of a Scotch cerebrum the reforming zeal of a TOLSTOI,  
I listen all unmov'd, as a sceptic among the believers.  
Yet what a charm has an earnest soul, whom sympathy  
    unchecked  
For human suffering has strengthen'd and dedicated  
Bravely to serve his kind, to renounce his natural instinct,  
And liv' apart, indulging in acts of mercy, delighted  
In wisdom's rock-hewn citadel<sup>v</sup>her law to illustrate,  
Embodying the pattern of self-integrity complete.

## Poems in

Yea, what a charm pervades discourse, that loftily reason'd  
Points the narrow pathway throu' this world's ugly disorder ;  
How very fair wil appear any gate of cleanliness, open 30  
From the city's tumult, its rank impurity, its dread  
Vulgarity's triumph : Nay sure & bounteous as Truth,  
Beautiful in confusion appeareth Simplicity's way.

—' Simple it is, (yóu say) God is good,—Nature is ample,—  
' Earth yields plenty for all,—and all might share in abundance,

' Were profit and labour but fairly divided among them.

' Scarce any laws are needed in our Utopia but these,—

' No fruitless labour to provide mere useless adornment,

' No money encouraging man's sloth & slavery, no rents 40

' Of titeld landlords, no pamper'd luxury breeding

' Fleshly disease, worst fiend & foe of mind body and soul ;

' All should work, and only produce life's only requirements :

' So with days all halfholidays, toil healthfully enjoy'd,

' Each might, throu' leisure hours of amusement piety and  
peace,

' In the domestic joys & holy community partake.—'

—This wer' a downleveling, my friend ; you need, to assure  
me,

Fix a limit to the folk ; else, as their number is increas't,

Their happiness may dwindle away, & what was at outset

Goal & prize, the provoker of all your wise revolution, 50

Will by subdivision disappear in course of atainment.

When goods are<sup>v</sup>increas'd, mouths are<sup>v</sup>increas'd to devour  
them :

If the famine be reliev'd this season in India, next dearth  
Will be a worse. You know how one day Herschel acosted  
Súch a philanthropical Save-all, who claimed to acomplish  
Some greatest happiness for a greatest number ; ' Attend,  
man ;

(Saíd-he) Resólve me anon one query : Suppose Adam and  
Eve

First créated on Earth but twice ten centuries ere Christ,

## Classical Prosody

That they gat four children in all, who liv'd, getting also  
Four to the pair : Had thus mankind ever equally increast 60  
By moderate families but doubling in each generation,  
How many souls would now be alive to revise the conundrum

Of greatest happiness? No<sup>y</sup> answer? Well, 'tis a long sum.  
Say if on earth such a crowd could stand. No? Pray then  
imáagine

All earth's land as a plain, & all this company thereon,  
Piled together like peas in a pintpot : How many layers?  
No guess? Then how high the column? How far wu'd it  
extend

Into the sky?—To the moon?—Further—To the sun?—To  
the sun! Pshaw!

That column of happy men would reach up, as I fathom its  
height,

Million diameters of Neptune's infinit' orbit.' 70

My<sup>y</sup> objection annoys your kindly philanthropy?—'It  
proves

'Too much.'—Yes nature shows in that scrutiny bankrupt;

Mere matter in deposit gives out. Yóu wish to determine

No limit of future polities : your actual object

Is to relieve suffering, to repeal injustice accruing

From monied inheritance, which makes a nonentity potent

For public mischief, who might, if usefully harness'd

In common employment, have assisted social order.

Why should Law give fifty talents where Nature alloys one?

For money is the talent of supreme empery : Gold, Gold 80

Envieth all, getteth all, absorbeth, mastereth all things :

It pusheth out & thrusteth away pitilessly the weak ones,

Those ill-fated, opprest, unfortun'd needy : Beneath them

Yawns the abyss. Down down they fall, as a stream on a  
mountain,

With ceaseless cataract. None hearkeneth ; only the silent

Grave, that darkly devours their cry of desperate anguish.

Spáre me the story ; believe more feel this grief than avow it :

## Poems in

'Tis put aside from thought with death's incurable evil;  
Left for them, that assume mankind as cause, to lament it.  
And what if all Nature ratify this merciless outrage? 90  
If her wonder of arch-wonders, her fair animal life,  
Her generate creatures, her motion'd warmblooded offspring,  
Haunters of the forest & royal country, her antler'd  
Mild-gazers, that keep silvan sabbath idly without end;  
Her herded galopers, sleeksided stately careerers  
Of trembling nostril; her coy unapproachable estrays,  
Stealthy treaders, climbers; her leapers furry, lissom-limb'd;  
Her timorous burrowers, and grangers thrifty, the sandy  
Playmates of the warren; her clumsy-footed, shaggy roamers;  
Her soarers, the feather'd fast-fliers, loftily floating 100  
Sky-sailers, exiles of high solitudinous eyries;  
Her perching carolers, twitterers, & sweetly singing birds:  
All ocean's finny clans, mute-mouthers, watery breathers,  
Furtive arrow-darters, and fan-tail'd easy balancers,  
Silvery-scale, gilt-head, thorn-back, frill'd harlequinading  
Globe and slimy ribbon: Shell-builders of many-chamber'd  
Pearly dwellings, soft shapes mosslike or starry, adorning  
With rich floral fancy the gay rock-garden of ebb-tide:  
All life, from the massive-bulkt, ivory-tusht, elephantine  
Centēnarian, acknowledging with crouching obeisance 110  
Man's will, ev'n to the least petty whiffling ephemeral insect,  
Which in a hot sunbeam engend'ring, when summer is high,  
Vaunteth an hour his speck of tinsely gaudiness and dies:  
Ah! what if all & each of Nature's favorite offspring,  
'Mong many distinctions, have this portentous agreement,  
MOUTH, STOMACH, INTESTINE? Question that brute appa-  
ratus,  
So manifoldly devis'd, set alert with furious instinct:  
What doth it interpret but this, that LIFE LIVETH ON LIFE?  
That the select creatures, who inherit earth's domination,  
Whose happy existence is Nature's intelligent smile, 120  
Are bloody survivors of a mortal combat, a-tweenwhiles  
Chanting a brief pæan for victory on the battlefield?

## Classical Prosody

Since that of all their kinds most owe their prosperous estate  
Unto the art, whereby they more successfully destroy'd  
Their weaker brethren, more insatiably devour'd them;  
And all fine qualities, their forms pictorial, admired,  
Their symmetries, their grace, & beauty, the loveliness of  
them,

Were by Murder evolv'd, to 'scape from it or to effect it.

'Surely again (you say) too much is proven, it argues  
'Mere horror & despair; unless persuasion avail us 130  
'That the moral virtues are man's idēa, awaken'd  
'By the spirit's motions; & therefore not to be conceiv'd  
'In Nature's outward & mainly material aspect,  
'As that is understood. You, since you hold that opinion,  
'Run your own ship aground invoking Nature against me.'—

Then withdraw the appeal, my friend, to her active aliance;  
Bē pessimist Nature with a pitchfork manfully expell'd,  
Not to return. Yet *soul in hand*, with brutal alegiance,  
Hunters & warriors *do not forget the comandment*.

See how lively the old animal continueth in them: 140  
Of what trifling account they hold life, yet what a practis'd  
Art pursue to preserve it: if I should rightly define sport  
SLAUGHTER WITH DANGER, what were more serious and brave?  
Their love of air, of strength, of wildness, afford us an inkling  
Of the delight of beasts, with whom they might innocently  
Boast a fellow-feeling, summoning them forth to the combat.  
Nay dream not so quickly to see her ladyship expell'd.  
Those prowling Lions of stony Kabylia, whose roar  
Frights from sleep the huddled herdsmen, soon as the sudden  
night

Falls on Mount Atlas, those grave uxorious outlaws 150  
Wandering in the Somali desert or waste Kalahari,  
Sound a challenge that amid summer-idling London is  
answer'd

Haply in Old Bond Street, where some fashionably attired  
youth

Daintily stands poisoning the weapon foredoom'd to appay them:



## Poems in

Or he mentally sighteth a tiger of India, that low  
Crouches among the river jungles, or hunts desolating  
Grassy Tarâi, 'neath lofty Himâlya, or far southward  
Outacamund, Mysore's residency, the Nilgherry mountains  
By Malabar ; yea, and ere-long shall sight him in earnest,  
Stalked as a deer, surprised where hē lay slumbering at noon  
Under a rock full-gorged, or deep in reedy covert hid 160  
By the trackers disturbed : Two grand eyes shall for a moment  
Glare upon either side the muzzle. Woe then to the hunter,  
If hē blench ! That fury beclouded in invisible speed  
What marksman could arrest ? what mortal abide his arrache-  
ment ?

Standing above the immense carcass hē gratefully praiseth  
God for a man-eater so fine, so worthy the slaying.

See him again ; 'tis war : one hill-rock strongly defended  
Checks advance, to be stormed at cost of half the assailants.  
Gaily away they go, Highlanders, English, or Irish, 170  
Or swart Ghoorkas against the leaden hail, climbing, ascend-  
ing,

Lost in a smoke, scattering, creeping, here there, ever  
upwards :

Till some change cometh o'er confusion. Who winneth ?  
ah ! see !

Ours have arrived, and he who led their bravery is there.  
None that heard will ever forget that far-echoing cheer :  
Such heard Nelson, above the crashings & thundering of  
guns :

At Marathon 'twas heard and all time's story remembers.

See him again, when at home visiting his episcopal uncle :  
That good priest contrast with this good captain, assay them :  
Find a common-measure equating their rival emotions ; 180  
Ëvaporate the rubbish, the degrading pestiferous fuss  
Of stuck-up importance, the palatial coterie, weigh out  
Then the solids : whose life would claim the award of an  
umpire

For greatest happiness ? High-priest or soldier ? Adjudge it



## Classical Prosody

By their books : Let a child give sentence. Ev'n as a magnet  
Turns and points to the north, so children's obstinate insight  
Flies to the tale of war, hairbreadth scapes, daring achieve-  
ments,  
Discoveries, conquests, the romance of history : these things  
Win them away from play to devour with greedy attention  
Till they long to be men ; while all that clerkly palaver 190  
Tastes like wormwood.—' Avast ! (I hear you calling) Avast  
there !  
' I forbid the appeal.'—Well, style my humour atrocious ;  
Granted a child cannot understand ; yet see what a huge  
growth  
Stands to be extermin'd, ere you can set dibble in ground.  
Nay, more yet ; that mighty forest, whose wildness offends  
you,  
And silences appal, where earth-life self-suffocating  
Seethes, lavish as sun-life in a red star's fi'ry corona ;  
That waste magnificence, and vain fecundity, breeding  
Giants & parasites embrac'd in flowery tangle,  
Interwoven alive and dead, where one tyrannous tree 200  
Blights desolating around it a swamp of rank vegetation ;  
Where Reason yet dreams unawakt, & throu' the solemn day  
Only the monkey chatters, & discordant the parrot screams :  
All this is in man's heart with dateless sympathy worshipt,  
With filial reverence, & awful pieties involv'd ;  
While that other picture, your formal fancy, the garden  
Of your stingy promise, must that not quench his imágin'd  
Idéals of beauty, his angel hope of attainment ?  
What to him are the level'd borders, the symmetric allot-  
ments,  
Where nothing exceedeth, nothing encroacheth, nor assaileth ;  
Where Reason now drudgeth a sad monomaniac, all day 211  
Watering & weeding, digging & diligently manuring  
Her label'd families, starch-makers, nitrogen-extract-  
Purveyors, classified potherbs & empty pretenders  
Of medical virtues ; nay ev'n and *their* little impulse

## Poems in

T'ward liberal fruiting disallow'd by stern regulation ;  
So many beans to a pod, with so many pods to a beanstalk ;  
Prun'd, pinch'd, economiz'd miserly til' all is abortion,  
Save in such specimens as, but for an extravagant care,  
Had miserably perish'd. What madness works to delude  
you, 220

Bēing a man, that you see not mankind's predilection  
Is for Magnificence, Force, Freedom, Bounty ; his inborn  
Love for Beauty, his aim to possess, his pride to devise it :  
And from everlasting his heart is fixt with affections  
Prēengag'd to a few sovrانly determinate objects,  
Toys of an ēternal distraction. Beautiful is GOLD,  
Clear as a trumpet-call, stirring where'er it appeareth  
All high pow'rs to battle ; with mágisterial ardour  
Glowing among the metals, elemental drops of a fire-god's  
Life-blood of old outpour'd in Chāos : Mágical also 230  
Ev'ry recondite jēwel of Earth, with their seraphim-names,  
RUBY, JACYNTH, EMERALD, AMETHYST, SAPPHIRE ; amaran-  
thine

Starry essences, elect emblems of purity, heirlooms  
Of deathless glories, most like to divine imanences.  
Then that heart-gladdening highpriz'd ambrosia, blending  
Their dissolute purples & golds with sparkling aroma,  
That ruddy juice exprest from favour'd vintages, infus'd  
With cosmic laughter, when upon some sécular epact  
Blandly the sun's old heart is stirr'd to a septennial smile,  
Causing strangefortun'd comfort to melancholy mortals : 240  
Friend to the flēsh, if mind be fatigued ; rallying to the sound  
mind,

When succour is needed 'gainst fainting weariness of flesh ;  
Shall Wine not be belov'd ? Or now let Aristotle answer  
What goods are,—Time leaves the scholar's inventory un-  
chang'd ;—

All Virtues & Pow'rs, Honour & Pleasure, all that in our life  
Makes us self-sufficient, Friends, Riches, Comeliness, and  
Strength ;

## *Classical Prosody*

They that have these things in plenty desire to retain them,  
And win more ; while they that lack are pleas'd to desire  
them.

Nay and since possession will leave the desire unappeasèd,  
Save in mere appetites that vary with our physical state, 250  
Surely delight in goods is an ecstasy rather attendant  
On their mental image, than on experienc'd operation.  
So the shepherd envies the monarch, the monarch the  
shepherd's lot,—

'O what a life were this, How sweet, how lovely!' the  
king cries.

Whence, I say, as a man feels brave who reads of ACHILLES,  
One looking on riches may learn some kindred elation,  
And whatever notions of fortune, luxury, comfort,  
Genius or virtue, are shown to him, only as aspects  
Of possible bēing, 'tis so much gain to desire them ;  
Learning Magnificence in mean obscurity, tasting 260  
Something of all those goods which Fate outwardly denies  
him.

But say none shall again be king or prosperous or great,—  
Arguing 'all eminence is unequal, unequal is unjust',—  
Should that once come about, then alas for this merry England,  
Sunk in a grey monotone of drudgery, dreamily poring  
O'er her illumin'd page of history, fain to regretful  
Worship of ancestors, with nought now left to delight her,  
Nought to attain, save one nurst hope, one ambition only  
Red Revolution, a wild Reawakening, & a Renaissance.

Impatiently enough you hear me, longing to refute me, 270  
While I in privileg'd pulpit my period expand.  
Who could allow such a list of strange miscellaneous items,  
So-call'd goods, Strength, Riches, Honour, Gold, Genius,  
and Wine?

Is not Wisdom above Rubies? more than Coral or Pearl?  
Yours is a scheme deep-laid on true distinctive assortment,  
Parting use or good from useless or evil asunder ;  
Dismissing accessories, while half my heathenish invoice

## Poems in

Are Vanity's vanities. Well; truly, as old SOLOMON said,  
So they *be*: What is excepted? What scapes his arraignment?  
Is't Pleasure or Wisdom? Nay ask THEOLOGIA: Good-  
works,

280

Saith-she, offend her nostril. If I distinguish, asserting,  
Say, that if I enjoyed my neighbour's excessive income  
I would hire me a string-quartett not an automaton car,  
You blame equally both our tastes for luxury, indeed  
His shows more of a use. If man's propensity is vain,  
Vulgar, inane, unworthy; 'tis also vain to bewail it:  
Think you to change his skin? 'Twere scale by scale to  
regraft it

With purer traditions; and who shall amend the amenders?  
Nay let *bé* the bubbles, till man grow more solid in mind,  
Condemn not the follies: My neighbour's foolery were worse,  
Sat he agape listening to Mozart, intently desiring 291  
All that time to be rattling *alóng* on a furious engine  
In caoutchouc carapace, with a trail of damnable oilstench.  
Yea, blame not the pleasures; they are not enough;  
pleasure only

Makes this life liveable: nor scout that doctrine as unsound:  
Consider if mankind from puling birth to bitter death  
Knew nought but the sorrows, endured unrespite always  
Those agonizing assaults which no flesh wholly can escape;  
Were his hunger a pang like his starvation, alievement  
Thereof a worse torture, like that which full many die with;  
Did love burn his soul as fire his skin; did affections 300  
Rend his will, as Turks rend men with horses asunder;  
Were his labour a breathless effort; his slumber occasion  
For visiting Furies to repair his temple of anguish;  
Were thoughts all mockeries; slow intelligence a deception;  
His mind's far ventures, her voyages into the unseen  
But horror & terrified nightmare; None then had ever heard  
Praise of a Crēator, nor seen any Dēity worshipped.  
'Twas for heav'nly Pleasure that God did first fashion all  
thing,

## Classical Prosody

Nor with other benefit would holy Religion attract us 310  
Picturing of Paradise. Consult our Lady's Evangel,  
Where Saint Luke,—colouring (was it unconsciously, suppose  
you ?)

Fact and fable alike,—contrasts a beggar with a rich man,  
And from holding a fool's happiness too greatly in esteem  
Makes pleasure eternal the balance of temporal evil,  
And the reverse ; nor shrinks, ascribing thus to the next world  
Vaster inequalities, harsher perversity than this.

You have a soul's paradise, its entry the loop of a needle,  
Come hither & prithy tell me what I must do to be savèd,  
I, that feeding on Idéals in temperat' estate 320  
Seem so wealthy to poor Lazarus, so needy to Dives :  
What from my heav'n-bound schooner's dispensable outfit  
Has to be cast o'erboard ? What see you here that offends  
you ?

These myriad volumes, these tons of music :—allow them  
Or disallow ? Fiddle and trichord ?—Must all be relin-  
quished ?

Such toys have not a place in your society ; you say  
Nobody shall make them, nor made may justly acquire them.  
Yet, should a plea be alleged for life's most gracious adorn-  
ment,

For contemplative art's last transcendental achievement,  
Grief's almighty solace, frolicking Mirth's Purification, 330  
For Man's unparagon'd High-pœtess, inseparate Muse  
Companion, the belov'd most dearly among her sisters,  
Revivifier of age, fairest instructor of all grace,  
His peacemaker alert with varied sympathy, whose speech  
Not to arede and love is wholly to miss the celestial  
Consolatries, the divine interpreting of physical life,—  
You wince ? make exception ? allow things musical ? admit  
So many faked viols, penny trumpets, and amateurish  
Performers ? Nay, nay ! stand firm, for concession is vain.  
Music is outmeasurably a barefaced luxury, her plea 340  
Will cover art, (—almost to atone art's vile imitations—) ;

## Poems in

My Japanese paintings, my fair blue Cheney, Hellenic  
Statues and Caroline silver, my beautiful Aldines,  
Prized more highly because so few, so fondly familiar,  
Need no tongue to defend them against rude hands, that  
assail them

Only because their name is RARITY ; hands insensate,  
Rending away pitilessly the fair embroideries of life,  
That close-clust'ring man, his comfort pared to the outskirts  
Of his discomfort, may share in meanness unenvied .  
But what if I unveil the figure that closely beside you 350  
Half hides his Hell-charred skeleton with mysteries obscene,  
That foul one, that Moloch of all Utopias, ancient  
Poisoner & destroyer-elect of innumerable unborn ?

Know you the story of our hive-bees, the yellow honey-  
makers,  
Whose images from of old have haunted Pœtry, settling  
On the blossoms of man's dream-garden, as on the summer-  
flow'rs,

Pictures of happy toil, sunny glances, gendering always  
Such sweet thoughts, as be by slumbrous music awaken'd ?  
How all their outward happiness,—that fairy demeanour  
Of busy contentment, singing at their work,—is an inborn 360  
Empty habit, the relics of a time when considerate joy  
Truly possess their tiny bodies ; when golden abundance  
Was not a State-kept hoard ; when feasts were plentiful  
indulg'd

With wine well-fermented, or old-stored spicy metheglin :  
For they died not then miserably within the second moon  
Forgotten, unrespected of all ; but slept many winters,  
Saw many springs, liv'd, lov'd like men, consciously rejoicing  
In Nature's promises, with like hopes and recollections.  
Intelligence had brought them Science, Genius enter'd ;  
Seers and sages arose, great Bees, perfecting among them 370  
Copious inventions, with man's art worthily compared.  
Then was a time when that, which haps not in ages of ages,  
Strangely befel : they stole from Nature's secresy one key,



## *Classical Prosody*

Found the hidden motive which works to variety of kind ;  
And thus came wondrously possess'd of pow'r to determine  
Their children's qualities, habitudes, yea their specialized  
form

Masculine or feminine to produce, or asexual offspring  
Redow'rd and differenced with such alternative organs  
As they chose, to whate'er preferential function adapted,  
Wax-pocket or honey-bag, with an instinct rightly accordant.

We know well the result, but not what causes effected 381  
Their decision to prefer so blindly the race to the unit,  
As to renounce happiness for a problem, a vain abstraction ;  
Making home and kingdom a vast egg-factory, wherein  
Food and life are stor'd up alike, and strictly proportion'd  
In loveless labour with mean anxiety. Wondrous  
Their reason'd motive, their altruistic obedience  
Unto a self-impos'd life-sentence of prison or toil.  
Wonder wisely ! then ask if these ingenious insects,  
(Who made Natur' against her will their activ' accomplice,  
And, methodizing anew her heartless system, averted 391  
From their house the torrent of whelming natural increase,)  
Are blood-guiltless among their own-born progeny : What  
skill

Keeps their peace, or what price buys it ? Alack ! 'tis  
murder,

Murder again. No worst Oriental despot, assuring  
'Gainst birthright or faction or envy his ill-gotten empire,  
So decimates his kin, as do these roun-bodied egg-queens  
Surprise competitors, and stab their slumbering infants,  
Into the wax-cradles replunging their double-edged stings.  
Or what a deed of blood some high-day, when the summer<sup>v</sup>  
hath 400

Their clammy cells o'erbrim'd, and already ripening orchards  
And late flow'rs proclaim that starving winter approacheth,  
Nor will again any queen lead forth her swarm, dispeopling  
Their strawbuilt citadel ; then watch how these busy workers  
Cease for awhile from toil ; how crowding upon the devoted

## Poems in

Drones they fall ; those easy fellows gave some provocation ;  
Yet 'tis a foul massacre, cold murder of unsuspecting  
Life-long companions ; and done bloodthirstily :—is not  
Exercise of pow'r a delight ? have you not a doctrine  
That calls duty pleasure ? What an if they make merry, saying  
'Lazy-livers, runagates, evil beasts, greedy devourers, 411  
'Too happy and too long ye've liv'd, unashamed to have  
outliv'd

'Your breeders, feeders, warmers and toiling attendants ;  
'Had-ye ever been worthy a public good to accomplish,  
'Each had nobly perish'd long-ago. Unneeded, obese ones,  
'Impious encumbrance, whose hope of service is over,  
'Who did not, now can not, assist the community, YE DIE !'

My parable may serve. What wisdom man hath attain'd to  
Came to him of Nature's goodwill throu' tardy selection :  
Should her teaching accuse herself and her method impugn,  
I may share with her the reproach of approving as artist 421  
Far other idēals than what seem needful in action.

This difficulty besets our time. If you have an answer,  
Write me it, as you keep your salt in savour ; or if toil  
Grant you an indulgence, here lies fair country, direct then  
Your Sabbath excursion westward, and spend a summer-day  
Preaching among the lilies what you have preached to the  
chimneys.



# *Classical Prosody*

## 3

### PEACE ODE

ON CONCLUSION OF THE BOER WAR, JUNE 1902

Now joy in all hearts with happy auguries,  
And praise on all lips : for sunny June cometh  
Chasing the thick warcloud, that outspread  
Sulfurous and sullen over England.

Full thirty moons since unwilling enmity,  
Since daily suspense for hideous peril  
Of brethren unrescued, beleaguer'd  
Plague-stricken in cities unprovided,

Had quencht accustom'd gaiety, from the day  
When first the Dutchman's implacable folly,  
The country of Shakspeare defying,  
Thought with a curse to appal the nation :

Whose threat to quell their kinsmen in Africa  
Anger'd awhile our easy democracy ;  
That, reckless and patient of insult,  
Will not abide arrogant defiance :

They called to arms ; and war began evilly.  
From slily forestor'd, well-hidden armouries,  
And early advantage, the despot  
Stood for a time prevalent against us

Till from the coil of slow-gathering battle  
He rancorous, with full moneybags hurried,  
Peddling to European envy  
His traffic of pennyworthy slander.

## Poems in

For since the first keel launch'd upon Ocean  
Ne'er had before so mighty an armament  
O'errun the realm of dark Poseidon,  
So resolutely measur'd the waters,

As soon from our ports in diligent passage  
O'er half the round world plow'd hither & thither  
The pathless Atlantic, revengeful  
Soldiery pouring on Esperanza:

Nor shows the Argive story of Ilium,  
With tale of ancient auxiliar cities,  
So vast a roll of wide alliance  
As, rallying to the aid of England,

Came from the swarming counties accoutering,  
And misty highlands of Caledonia,  
With Cambria's half-Celtic offspring,  
And the ever-merry fighting Irish:

Came too the new world's hardy Canadians,  
And from remote Australia champions  
Like huntsmen, and from those twin islands  
Lying off antipodal beyond her,

Under the old flag sailing across the sea:  
For mighty is blood's empery, where honour  
And freedom ancestral have upbuilt  
Inheritance to a lovely glory.

Thee, France, love I, fair lawgiver and scholar;  
Thy lively grace, thy temper illustrious;  
And thee, in all wisdom Diviner,  
Germany, deep melodist immortal;

Nor less have envied soft Italy's spirit,  
In marble unveil'd and eloquent colour:  
But best love I England, wer' I not  
Born to her aery should envy also.

## *Classical Prosody*

Wherefore to-day one gift above every gift  
Let us beseech, that God will accord to her  
    Always a right judgement in all things;  
    Ev'n to celestial excellencies ;

And grant us in long peace to accumulate  
Joy, and to stablish friendliness and commerce,  
    And barter in markets for unpriced  
    Beauty, the pearl of unending empire.

*May, 1902.*

### 4

## EVENING

FROM WM. BLAKE<sup>1</sup>

COME, rosy angel, thy coronet donning  
Of starry jēwels, smile upon ev'ry bed,  
    And grant what each day-weary mortal,  
    Labourer or lover, asketh of thee.

Smile thou on our loves, enveloping the land  
With dusky curtain : consider each blossom  
    That timely upcloseth, that opens  
    Her treasure of heavy-laden odours.

Now, while the west-wind slumbereth on the lake,  
Silently dost thou with delicate shimmer  
    O'erbloom the frowning front of awful  
    Night to a glance of unearthly silver.

No hungry wild beast rangeth in our forest,  
No tiger or wolf prowleth around the fold :  
    Keep thou from our sheepcotes the tainting  
    Invisible peril of the darkness.

<sup>1</sup> There is another alcaic translation from Blake on p. 71 in 'Demeter'. The Ode on p. 72 is iambic, and the Chorus on pp. 53, 54 is in choriambics.

## Poems in

### 5

#### POVRE AME AMOUREUSE

. FROM LOUISE LABE, 1555

(*Sapphics*)

WHEN to my lone soft bed at eve returning  
Sweet desir'd sleep already stealeth o'er me,  
My spirit flieth to the fairy-land of  
her tyrannous love.

Him then I think fondly to kiss, to hold him  
Frankly then to my bosom ; I that all day  
Have lookèd for<sup>v</sup>him suffering, repining,  
yea many long days.

O blessèd sleep, with flatteries beguile me ;  
So,<sup>v</sup>if I ne'er may<sup>v</sup>of a surety have<sup>v</sup>him,  
Grant to my poor soul amorous the dark gift  
of this illusion.

### 6

#### THE FOURTH DIMENSION

(*Hendecasyllables*)

TRUEST-HEARTED of early friends, that Eton  
Long since gáve to me,—Ah ! 'tis all a life-time,—  
With my faithfully festive auspication  
Of Christmas merriment, this idle item.

Plato truly believ'd his archetypal  
Idéas to possess the fourth dimension:  
For since our solid is triple, but always  
Its shade only double, solids as *umbræ*  
Must lack equally one dimension also.  
Could Plato<sup>v</sup>have avoided or denied it ?

## *Classical Prosody*

So Saint Paul, when in argument opposing  
To our earthly bodies bodies celestial,  
Meant just those pretty Greek aforesaid abstracts  
Of four Plātonical divine dimensions.

If this be not a holy consolation  
More than plumpudding and a turkey roasted,  
Whereto you but address a third dimension,  
Try it, pray, as a pill to aid digestion :  
I can't find anything better to send you.

### 7

JOHANNES MILTON, *Senex*

#### *Scazons*

SINCE I believe in God the Father Almighty,  
Man's Maker and Judge, Overruler of Fortune,  
'Twere strange should I praise anything and refuse Him  
praise,  
Should love the creature forgetting the Crēator,  
Nor unto Him<sup>v</sup>in suff'ring and sorrow turn me :  
Nay how coud I withdraw me from<sup>v</sup>His embracing ?

But since that I have seen not, and cannot know Him,  
Nor in my earthly temple apprehend rightly  
His wisdom and the heav'nly purpose ēternal ;  
Therefore will I be bound to no studied system  
Nor argument, nor with delusion enslave me,  
Nor seek to pleāse Him in any foolish invention,  
Which my spirit within me, that loveth beauty  
And hateth evil, hath reprov'd as unworthy :

But I cherish my freedom in loving service,  
Gratefully adoring for delight beyond asking  
Or thinking, and in hours of anguish and darkness  
Confiding always on<sup>v</sup>His excellent greatness.

# *Poems in*

## 8

### PYTHAGORAS

#### *Scazons*

THOU vainly, O Man, self-deceiver, exaltest  
Thyself the king and only thinker of this world,  
Where life aboundeth infinite to destroy thee.

Well-guided are thy forces and govern'd bravely,  
But like a tyrant cruel or savage monster  
Thou disregardest ignorantly all being  
Save only thine own insubordinate ruling:

As if the flower held not a happy pact with Spring;  
As if the brutes lack'd reason and sorrow's torment;  
Or ev'n divine love from the small atoms grew not,  
Their grave affection unto thy passion mingling.

An truly were it nobler and better wisdom  
To fear the blind thing blindly, lest it espy thee;  
And scrupulously do honour to dumb creatures,

No one offending impiously, nor forcing  
To service of vile uses ; ordering rather  
Thy slave to beauty, compelling lovingkindness.

So should desire, the only priestess of Nature  
Divinely inspir'd, like a good monarch rule thee,  
And lead thee onward in the consummate motion  
Of life eternal unto heav'nly perfection.

# *Classical Prosody*

## *Elegiacs*

9

AMIEL

WHY, O Maker of all, madest thou man with affections  
Tender above thyself, scrupulous and passionate?  
Nay, if compassionate thou art, why, thou lover of men,  
Hidest thou thy face so pitilessly from us?  
If thou in priesthoods and altar-glory delitest,  
In torment and tears of trouble and suffering,  
Then wert thou displeas'd looking on soft human emotion,  
Thou must scorn the devout love of a sire to a son.  
'Twas but vainly of old, Man, making Faith to approach thee,  
Held an imagin'd scheme of providence in honour;  
And, to redeem thy praise, judg'd himself cause, took upon  
him  
Humbly the impossible burden of all misery.  
Now casteth he away his books and logical idols  
Leaveth again his cell of terrified penitence;  
And that stony goddess, his first-born fancy, dethroning,  
Hath made after his own homelier art another;  
Made sweet Hope, the modest unportion'd daughter of  
anguish,  
Whose brimming eye sees but dimly what it looketh on;  
Dreaming a day when fully, without curse or horrible cross,  
Thou wilt deign to reveal her vision of happiness.

IO

AH, what a change! Thou, who didst emptily thy happiness  
seek  
In pleasure, art finding thy pleasure in happiness.  
Slave to the soul, whom thou heldest in slavery, art thou?  
Thou, that wert but a vain idol, adored a goddess?

# Poems in

## 11

### WALKING HOME

FROM THE CHINESE

THOUSAND threads of rain and fine white wreathing of air-  
mist

Hide from us earth's greenness, hide the enarching azure.  
Yet will a breath of Spring homeward conveying attend us,  
And the mellow flutings of passionate Philomel.

## 12

### THE RUIN

FROM THE CHINESE

THESE grey stones have rung with mirth and lordly carousel ;  
Here proud kings mingled pōetry and ruddy wine.  
All hath pass'd long ago ; nought but this rūin abideth,  
Sadly in eyeless trance gazing upon the river.  
Wouldst thou know who here visiteth, dwelleth and singeth  
also,  
Ask the swallows flyīng from sunny-wall'd Italy.

## 13

### REVENANTS

FROM THE FRENCH

At dead of unseen night ghosts of the departed assembling  
Flit to the graves, where each in body had burial.  
Ah, then rēvisiting my sad heart their desolate tomb  
Troop the desires and loves vainly buried long ago.



# *Classical Prosody*

14

## FROM THE GREEK

MORTAL though I bé, yea ephemeral, if but a moment  
I gaze up to the night's starry domain of heaven,  
Then no longer on earth I stand ; I touch the Creator,  
And my lively spirit drinketh immortality.

15

## ANNIVERSARY

SEE, Love, a year is pass'd : in harvest our summer endeth :  
Praising thee the solemn festival I celebrate.  
Unto us all our days are love's anniversaries, each one  
In turn hath ripen'd something of our happiness.  
So, lest heart-contented adown life easily floating,  
We note not the passage while living in the delight,  
I have honour'd always the attentive vigil of Autumn,  
And thy day set apart holy to fair Memory.

16

## COMMUNION OF SAINTS

### FROM ANDRE CHENIER

WHAT happy bonds together unite you, ye living and dead,  
Your fadeless love-bloom, your manifold memories.

## EPITAPHS

17

FIGHT well, my comrades, and prove your bravery. Me too  
God call'd out, but crown'd early before the battle.

## Poems in

18

I DIED in very flow'r : yet call me not unhappy therefore,  
Ye that against sweet life once a lament have utter'd.

19

WHEN thou, my belovèd, diedst, I saw heaven open,  
And all earthly delight inhabiting Paradise.

20

WHERE thou art better I too were, dearest, anywhere, than  
Wanting thy well-lov'd lovely presence anywhere.

21

### IBANT OBSCURI

*A line for line paraphrase of a part of  
Virgil's Æneid, Bk. VI.*

THEY wer' amid the shadows by night in loneliness obscure  
Walking forth i' the void and vasty dominyon of Ades;  
As by an uncertain moonray secretly illumin'd 270  
One goeth in the forest, when heav'n is gloomily clouded,  
And black night hath robb'd the colours and beauty from all  
things.

Here in Hell's very jaws, the threshold of darkening Orcus,  
Have the avenging Cares laid their sleepless habitation,  
Wailing Grief, pallid Infections, & heart-stricken Old-age,  
Dismal Fear, unholy Famine, with low-groveling Want,  
Forms of spectral horror, gaunt Toil and Death the devourer,  
And Death's drowsy brother, Torpor ; with whom, an inane  
rout, 278  
All the Pleasures of Sin ; there also the Furies in ambusht

## *Classical Prosody*

Chamber of iron, afore whose bars wild War bloodyhanded  
Raged, and mad Discord high brandisht her venomous locks.

Midway of all this tract, with secular arms an immense elm  
Reareth a crowd of branches, aneath whose leafy protection  
Vain dreams thickly nestle, clinging unto the foliage on high :  
And many strange creatures of monstrous form and features  
Stable about th' entrance, Centaur and Scylla's abortion,  
And hundred-handed Briareus, and Lerna the wildbeast  
Roaring amain, and clothed in frightful flame the Chimæra,  
Gorgons and Harpies, <sup>1</sup> and Pluto's three-bodied ogre.

In terror Æneas upheld his sword to defend him, 290  
With ready naked point confronting their dreaded onset :  
And had not the Sibyl warn'd how these lively spirits were  
All incorporeal, flitting in thin maskery of form,  
He had assail'd their host, and wounded vainly the void air.

Hence is a road that led them a-down to the Tartarean  
streams,

Where Acheron's whirlpool impetuous, into the reeky  
Deep of Cokytos disgorgeth, with muddy burden.  
These floods one ferryman serveth, most awful of aspect,  
Of squalor infernal, Chāron : all filthily unkempt  
That woolly white cheek-fleece, and fiery the blood-shotten  
eyeballs : 300

On one shoulder a cloak knotted-up his nudity vaunteth.  
He himself plieth oar or pole, manageth tiller and sheet,  
And the relics of mén in his ash-grey barge ferries over ;  
Already old, but green to a god and hearty will age be.

Now hitherward to the bank much folk were crowding,  
a medley

Of men and matrons ; nor did death's injury conceal  
Bravespirited heroes, young maidens beauteous unwed,  
And boys borne to the grave in sight of their sorrowing sires.

Countless as in the forest, at a first white frosting of autumn  
Sere leaves fall to the ground ; or like whenas over the ocean  
Myriād birds come thickly flocking, when wintry December 311  
Drives them afar southward for shelter upon sunnier shores,

## Poems in

So throng'd they ; and each his watery journey demanded,  
All to the further bank stretching-out their arms impatient :  
But the sullen boatman took now one now other at will,  
While some from the river forbade he', an' drave to a distance.

Æneas in wonder alike and deep pity then spake.

'Tell-me,' said he, ' my guide, why flock these crowds to the  
water ?

Or what seek the spirits ? or by what prejudice are these  
Rudely denied, while those may upon the solemn river em-  
bark ?' 320

T'whom \* then briefly again the Avernîan priestess in answer.  
'O Son of Anchises, heavn's true-born glorious offspring,  
Deep Cokytos it is thou sêest & Hell's Stygiân flood,  
Whose dread sanctiôn alone Jove's oath from falsehood  
assureth.

These whom thou pitiedst, th' outcast and unburied are they ;  
That ferryman Châron ; those whom his bark carries over  
Are the buried ; nor ever may mortal across the livid lake  
Journey, or e'er upon Earth his bones lie peacefully entomb'd :  
Haunting a hundred years this mournful plain they wander  
Doom'd for a term, which term expired they win to  
deliv'rance.' 330

Then he that harken'd stood agaze, his journey arrested,  
Grieving at heart and much pitying their unmerited lot.  
There miserably fellow'd in death's indignity saw he  
Leucaspis with his old Lycian seachieften Orontes,  
Whom together from Troy in home-coming over the waters  
Wild weather o'ermaster'd, engulfing both shipping and  
men.

And lo ! his helmsman, Palinurus, in eager emotion,  
Who on th' Afric course, in bright star-light, with a fair wind,  
Fell by slumber oppress unheedfully into the wide sea :  
Whom i' the gloom when hardly he knew, now changed in  
affliction, 340

\* Line 321. 'T'whom' is from Milton, in imitation of Virgil's admired Olli. It is not admitted in the ordinary prosody.

## *Classical Prosody*

First he addrest. 'What God, tell-me O Palinurus, of all  
gods

Plúckt you away and drown'd i' the swift wake-water abandon'd?

For never erst nor in else hath kind responsive Apollo  
Led-me astray, but alone in this thing wholly deluded,  
When he aver'd that you, to remote Ausōnia steering,  
Safe would arrive. Where now his truth? Is this the  
promis'd faith?

But he, 'Neither again did Phoebus wrongly bespeak thee,  
My general, nor yet did a god in his enmity drown me:  
For the tiller, wherewith I led thy fleet's navigation,  
And still clung to, was in my struggling hold of it unshipt, 350  
And came with-me' o'erboard. Ah! then, by ev'ry accurst  
sea,

Tho' in utter despair, far less mine own peril awed me  
Than my thought o' the ship, what harm might háp to her,  
yawing

In the billows helmless, with a high wind and threatening  
gale.

Two nights and one day buffeted held I to the good spar  
Windborne, with the current far-drifting, an' on the second  
morn

Saw, when a great wave raised me aloft, the Italyan highlands;  
And swimming-on with effort got ashore, nay already was  
saved,

Had not there the wrecking savages, who spied-me defence-  
less,

Scarce clinging outwearied to a rock, half-drowned & speech-  
less, 360

Beát me to death for hope of an unfound booty upon me.  
Now to the wind and tidewash a sport my poor body rolleth.  
Wherefore thee, by heav'n's sweet light & airness, I pray,  
By thy Sire's memories, thy hope of youthful Iulus,  
Rescue-me from these ills, brave master; Go to Velija,  
O'er my mortality's spoil cast thou th' all-hallowing dust:

## Poems in

Or better, if so be the goddess, heav'n's lady-Creatress,  
Show-thee the way,—nor surely without high favoring impulse  
Mak'st thou ventur' across these floods & black Ereban lake,—  
Give thy hand-to-me', an' o'er their watery boundary bring  
me 370

Unto the haven of all, death's home of quiet abiding.'  
Thus he lamented, anon spake sternly the maid of Avernus.  
' Whence can such unruly desire, Palinurus, assail thee?  
Wilt thou th' Eumenidan waters visit unburied? o'erpass  
Hell's Stygian barrier? Chāron's boat unbidden enter?  
Cease to believe that fate can bé by prayër averted.  
Let my sooth a litel thy cruel destiny comfort  
Surely the people of all thy new-found country, determin'd  
By heav'n-sent omens will achieve thy purification, 379  
Build thee a tomb of honour with yearly solemnity ordain'd,  
And dedicate for ever thy storied name to the headland.'

These words lighten awhile his fear, his sadness allaying,  
Nor vain was the promise his name should eternally survive.

They forthwith their journey renew, tending to the water:  
Whom when th' old boatman descried silently emerging  
Out o' the leafy shadows, advancing t'ward the river-shore,  
Angrily gave he challenge, imperious in salutation.  
' Whosoever thou be, that approachest my river all-arm'd,  
Stand to announce thyself, nor further make footing onward.  
Here 'tis a place of ghosts, of night & drowsy delusion: 390  
Forbidden unto living mortals is my Stygian keel:  
Truly not Alkides embarkt I cheerfully, nor took  
Of Theseus or Pirithous glad custody, nay though  
God-sprung were they both, warriors invincible in might:  
Hé 'twas would sportively the guard of Tartarus enchain,  
Yea and from the palace with gay contumely dragged him:  
Théy to ravish Hell's Queen from Pluto's chamber attempted.'

Then thus th' Amphrysian prophetess spake briefly in  
answer.

' No such doughty designs are ours, Cease thou to be movèd!  
Nor these sheeny weapons intend force. Cerberus unvext

## Classical Prosody

Surely for us may affray the spirits with 'howling eternal, 401  
And chaste Persephone enjoy her queenly seclusion.  
Troian Æneas, bravest and gentlest-hearted,  
Hath left earth to behold his father in out-lying Ades.  
If the image ' of a so great virtue doth not affect thee,  
Yet this bough '—glittering she reveal'd its golden  
avouchment—

'Thou mayst know.' Forthwith his bluster of heart was  
appeased :

Nor word gave he, but admiring the celestial omen,  
That bright sprigg of weird for so long period unseen,  
Quickly he-túrneth about his boat, to the margin ap-  
proaching, 410

And the spirits, that along the gun'al benchways sat in order,  
Drave he ashore, offering readyroom : but when the vessel took  
Ponderous Æneas, her timbers crankily straining  
Creak'd, an' a brown water came trickling through the upper  
seams.

Natheless both Sibyl and Hero, slow wafted across stream,  
Safe on th' ooze & slime's hideous desolation alighted.

Hence the triple-throated bellowings of Cerberus invade  
All Hell, where opposite the arrival he lies in a vast den.  
But the Sibyl, who mark'd his necklaces of stiffening snakes,  
Cast him a cake, poppy-drench'd with drowsiness and honey-  
sweeten'd. 420

He, rabid and distending a-hungry' his triply-cavern'd jaws,  
Gulp'd the proffer'd morsel ; when slow he-relaxt his immense  
bulk,

And helplessly diffused fell out-sprawl'd over the whole cave.  
Æneas fled by, and left full boldly the streamway,  
That biddeth all men across but alloweth ne'er a returning.

Already now i' the air were voices heard, lamentation,  
And shrilly crying of infant souls by th' entry of Ades.  
Babes, whom unportion'd of sweet life, unblossoming buds,  
One black day carried off and chokt in dusty corruption.—  
Next are they who falsely accused were wrongfully condemn'd



## Poems in

Unto the death : but here their lot by justice is order'd. 431  
Inquisitor Minos, with his urn, summoning to assembly  
His silent council, their deed or slander arraigneth.—  
Next the sullen-hearted, who rashly with else-innocent hand  
Their own life did-away, for hate or weariness of light,  
Imperiling their souls. How gladly, if only in Earth's air,  
Would-they again their toil, discomfort, and pities endure !  
Fate obstructs : deep sadness now, unloveliness awful  
Rings them about, & Styx with ninefold circle enarmeth.—

Not far hence they come to a land extensive on all sides; 440  
Weeping Plain 'tis call'd:—such name such country  
deserveth.

Here the lovers, whom fiery passion hath cruelly consumed,  
Hide in leafy alleys 'and pathways bow'ry, sequester'd  
By woodland myrtle, nor hath Death their sorrow ended.  
Here was Phædra to see, Procris 'and sád Eriphyle,  
She of her unfilial deathdoing wound not ashamèd,  
Evadne, 'and Pasiphae 'and Laodamia,  
And epicene Keneus, a woman to a man metamorphos'd,  
Now by Fate converted again to her old feminine form.

'Mong these shades, her wound yet smarting ruefully, Dido  
Wander'd throu' the forest-obscurity ; and Æneas 451  
Standing anigh knew surely the dim form, though i' the  
darkness

Veil'd,—as when one seëth a young moon on the horizon,  
Or thinketh to 'have seen i' the gloaming her delicate horn ;  
Tearfully in oncelov'd accents he-lovingly addrest her.

'Unhappy ! ah ! too true 'twas told me 'O unhappy Dido,  
Dead thou wert ; to the fell extreme didst thy passion ensue.  
And was it I that slew-thee ? Alas ! Smite falsity, ye  
heav'ns !

And Hell-fury attest-me', if here any sanctity reigneth,  
Unwilling, O my Queen, my step thy kingdom abandon'd. 460  
Me the command of a god, who here my journey determines  
Through Ereban darkness, through fields sown with  
desolation,



## *Classical Prosody*

Drive-me to wrong my heart. Nay tho' deep-pain'd to  
desert thee

I ne'er thought to provoke thy pain of mourning eternal.  
Stay yet awhile, ev'n here unlook'd-for again look upon me :  
Fly-me not ere the supreme words that Fate granteth us are  
said.'

Thus he : but the spirit was raging, fiercely defiant,  
Whom he approach'd with words to appease, with tears for  
atonement.

She to the ground downcast her<sup>l</sup> eyes in fixity averted ;  
Nor were her features more by his pleading affected, 470  
Than wer' a face of flint, or of ensculptur'd alabaster.  
At length she started disdainful, an' angrily withdrew  
Into a shady thicket : where her grief kindly Sychæus  
Sooth'd with other memories, first love and virginal embrace.  
And ever Æneas, to remorse by deep pity soften'd,  
With brimming eyes pursued her queenly figure disappearing.

Thence the Sibyl to the plain's extremest boundary led him,  
Where world-fam'd warriors, a lionlike company, haunted.  
Here great Tydeus saw he eclips'd, & here the benighted  
Phantom of Adrastus, <sup>l</sup> of stalwart Parthenopæus. 480  
Here long mourn'd upon earth went all that prowess of Ilium  
Fallen in arms ; whom, when he-beheld them, so many and  
great,

Much he-bewail'd. By Thersilochus his mighty brothers  
stood,

Children of Antenor ; here Demetriân Polyphates,  
And Idæus, in old chariot-pose dreamily stalking.  
Right and left the spirits flocking on stood crowding around  
him ;

Nor their eyes have enough ; they touch, find joy unwonted  
Marching in equal stép, and eager of his coming enquire.  
But th' Argive leaders, and they that obey'd Agamemnon  
When they saw that Trojan in arms come striding among  
them, 490

Old terror invaded their ranks : some fled stricken, as once

## Poems in

They to the ships had fled for shelter ; others the alarm raise,  
But their thin utterance mock'd vainly the lips wide parted.  
Here too Deiphobus he espied, his fair body mangled,  
Cruelly dismember'd, disfeatur'd cruelly his face,  
Face and hands ; and lo ! shorn closely from either temple,  
Gone wer' his ears, and maim'd each nostril in impious  
outrage.

Barely he-knew him again cowering shamefastly ' an' hiding  
His dire plight, & thus he 'his old companyon accosted.  
'Noblest Deiphobus, great Teucer's intrepid offspring, 500  
Who was it, inhuman, coveted so cruel a vengeance ?  
Who can hav' adventur'd on thee ? That last terrible night  
Thou wert said to hav' exceeded thy bravery, an' only  
On thy faln enemies wert faln by weariness o'ercome.  
Wherefor' upon the belov'd sea-shore thine empty sepulchral  
Mound I erected, aloud on thy ghost tearfully calling.  
Name and shield keep for-thee the place ; but thy body, dear  
friend,

Found I not, to commit to the land ere sadly ' I left it.'

Then the son of Priam ' ' I thought not, friend, to reproach  
thee :

Thou didst all to the full, ev'n my shade's service, accom-  
plish. 501

'Twas that uninterdicted adultress from Lacedæmon  
Drive-me to doom, & planted in hell, her trophy triumphant.  
On that night,—how vain a security and merrymaking  
Then sullied us thou know'st, yea must too keenly re-  
member,—

When the ill-omened horse o'erleapt Troy's lofty defences,  
Dragg'd in amidst our town pregnant with a burden of arm'd  
men.

She then, her Phrygian women in feign'd phrenzy collecting,  
All with torches aflame, in wild Bacchic orgy paraded,  
Flaring a signal aloft to her ambusht confederate Greeks.  
I from a world of care had fled with weariful eyelids 520  
Unto my unhappy chamber', an' lay fast lockt in oblivyon,

## Classical Prosody

Sunk to the depth of rest as a child that nought will awaken.  
Meanwhile that paragon helpmate had robb'd me of all arms,  
E'en from aneath the pillow my blade of trust purloining ;—  
Then to the gate ; wide flings she it op'n an' calls Menelaus.  
Would not a so great service attach her faithful adorer ?  
Might not it extinguish the repute of her earlier illdeeds ?  
Brief-be the tale. Menelaus arrives : in company there came  
His crime-counsellor Æolides. . So, and more also  
Déal-ye', O Gods, to the Greeks ! an' if I call justly upon  
you.—

530

But thou ; what fortune hitherward, in turn prithy tell me,  
Sent thee alive, whether erring upon the bewildering Ocean,  
Or high-prompted of heav'n, or by Fate wearily hunted,  
That to the sunless abodes and dusky demesnes thou  
approachest ?'

Ev'n as awhile they thus converse it is already mid-day  
Unperceiv'd, but aloft earth's star had turn'd to declining.  
And haply' Æneas his time in parley had outgone,  
Had not then the Sibyl with word of warning avized him.  
'Night hieth, Æneas ; in tears our journey delayeth.  
See our road, that it here in twain disparteth asunder ; 540  
This to the right, skirting by th' high city-fortresses of Dis,  
Endeth in Elysium, our path ; but that to the leftward  
Only receives their feet who wend to eternal affliction.'  
Deiphobus then again, 'Speak not, great priestess, in anger ;  
I will away to refill my number among th' unfortun'd.  
Thou, my champyon, adieu ! Go where thy glory awaits  
thee !'

When these words he 'had spok'n, he-turn'd and hastily was  
fled.

Æneas then look'd where leftward, under a mountain,  
Outspread a wide city lay, threefold with fortresses engirt,  
Lickt by a Tartarean river of live fire, the torrentiâl 550  
Red Phlegethon, and huge boulders his roundy bubbles be :  
Right i' the front stareth the columnar gate adamantine,  
Such that no battering warfare of mén or immortals

## Poems in

E'er might shake; blank-faced to the cloud its bastion  
upstands.

Tisiphone thereby in a bloodspotty robe sitteth alway  
Night and day guarding sleeplessly the desperat entrance,  
Wherefrom an awestirring groan-cry and fierce clamour  
outburst,

Sharp lashes, insane yells, dragg'd chains and clanking of  
iron.

Æneas drew back, his heart by' his hearing affrighted :  
'What manner of criminals, my guide, now tell-me,' he-  
question'd, 560

'Or what their penalties? what this great wail that ariseth?'  
Answering him the divine priestess, 'Brave hero of Ilîum,  
O'er that guilty threshold no breath of purity may come :  
But Hecate, who gave-me to rule i' the groves of Avernus,  
Herself led me around, & taught heav'n's high retribution.  
Here Cretan Rhadamanthus in unblest empery reigneth,  
Secret crime to punish,—full surely he-wringeth avowal  
Even of all that on earth, by vain impunity harden'd,  
Men sinning have put away from thought till'impenitent  
death.

On those convicted tremblers then leapeth avenging 570  
Tisiphone with keen flesh-whips and viper's scourges,  
And of her implacable sisters inviteth attendance.'

—Now sudden on screeching hinges that portal accurs'd  
Flung wide its barriers.—'In what dire custody, mark thou,  
Is the threshold! guarded by how grim sentry the doorway!  
More terrible than they the ravin'd insatiable Hydra  
That sitteth angry within. Know too that Tartarus itself  
Dives sheer gaping aneath in gloomy profundity downward  
Twice that height that a man looketh-up t'ward airy  
Olympus.

Lowest there those children of Earth, Titanian elders, 580  
In the abyss, where once they fell hurl'd, yet wallowing lie.  
There the Alöidæ saw I, th' ungainly rebel twins  
Primæval, that assay'd to devastate th' Empyræan

## *Classical Prosody*

With huge hands, and rob from Jove his kingdom immortal.  
And there Salmoneus I saw, rend'ring heavy payment,  
For that he idly' had mockt heav'n's fire and thunder  
electric ;

With chariot many-yoked and torches brandishing on high  
Driving among 'his Graian folk in Olympian Elis ;  
Exultant as a God he rode in blasphemy worshipt. 589

Fool, who th' unreckoning tempest and deadly dreaded bolt  
Thought to mimic with brass and confus'd trample of horses !  
But 'him th' Omnipotent, from amidst his cloudy pavilion,  
Blasted, an' eke his rattling car and smoky pretences  
Extinguish'd at a stroke, scattering<sup>1</sup> his dust to the whirlwind.  
There too huge Tityos, whom Earth that gendereth all  
things

Once foster'd, spreadeth-out o'er nine full roods his immense  
limbs.

On him a wild vulture with hook-beak greedily gorgeth  
His liver upsprouting quick as that Hell-chicken eateth.  
Shé diggeth and dwelleth under the vast ribs, her bloody  
bare neck

Lifting anon : ne'er loathes-she the food, ne'er fails the re-  
newal. 600

Where wer' an end their names to relate, their crimes and  
torments ?

Some o'er whom a hanging black rock, slipping at very  
point of

Falling, ever threateneth : Couches luxurious invite  
Softly-cushion'd to repose : Tables for banqueting outlaid  
Tempt them ever-famishing : hard by them a Fury regardeth,  
And should théy but a hand uplift, trembling to the dainties,  
She with live firebrand and direful yell springeth on them.

Their crimes,—not to' hav lov'd a brother while love was  
allow'd them ;

Or to' hav struck their father, or inveigled a dependant ; 609  
Or who chancing alone on wealth prey'd lustfully thereon,  
Nor made share with others, no greater company than they :

## Poems in

Some for adultery slain ; some their bright swords had  
offended

Drawn i' the wrong : or a master's trust with perfidy had met :  
Dungeon'd their penalties they await. Look not to be  
answer'd

What that doom, nor th' end of these men think to deter-  
mine.

Sóme aye roll heavy rocks, some whirl dizzy on the revolving  
Spokes of a pendant wheel : sitteth and to eternity shall sit  
Unfortun'd Theseus ; while sad Phlegias saddeneth hell

With vain oyez to ' all loud crying a tardy repentance,  
"Walk, O man, i' the fear of Gód, and learn to be righteous!"  
Here another, who sold for gold his country, promoting 621  
Her tyrant ; or annull'd for a base bribe th' inviolate law.

This one had unfather'd his blood with bestial incest :

All some fearful crime had dared & vaunted achievement.

What mind could harbour the offence of such recollection,

Or lend welcoming ear to the tale of iniquity and shame,

And to the pains wherewith such deeds are justly requited ?

Ev'n when thus she' had spok'n, the priestess dear to  
Apollo,

' But, ready, come let us ón, perform-we the order appointed !

Hast'n-we (saith-she), the wall forged on Cyclopián anvils

Now I see, an' th' archway in Ætna's furnace attemper'd, 631

Where my lore biddeth us to depose our high-privileg'd  
gift.'

Then together they trace i' the drooping dimness a foot-  
path,

Whereby, faring across, they arrive at th' arches of iron.

Æneas stept into the porch, and duly besprinkling

His body with clear water affixt his bough to the lintel ;

And, having all perform'd at length with ritual exact,

They came out on a lovely pleasance, that dream'd-of oasis,

Fortunate isle, the abode o' the blest, their fair Happy

Woodland.

Here is an ampler sky, those meads ar' azur'd by a gentler

## Classical Prosody

Sun than th' Earth, an' a new starworld their darkness  
adorneth. 641

Some were matching afoot their speed on a grassy arena,  
In playful combat some wrestling upon the yellow sand,  
Part in a dance-rhythm or poetry's fine phantasy engage;  
While full-toga'd anear their high-priest musical Orpheus  
Bade his prime sev'n tones in varied harmony discourse,  
Now with finger, anon sounding with an ivory plectrum.  
And here Æneas met Teucer's fortunate offspring,  
High-spirited heroes, fair-favor'd sons o' the morning,  
Assarac and Ilos<sup>1</sup> and Dardan founder of Ilûm : 650  
Their radiant chariots he' espied rank't empty afar off,  
Their spears planted afield, their horses wandering at large,  
Grazing around:—as on earth their joy had been, whether  
armour

Or chariot had charmed them, or if 'twere good manage and  
care

Of the gallant warhorse, the delight liv'd here unabated:  
Lo! then others, that about the meadow sat feasting in  
idless,

And chanting for joy a familiar pæan of old earth,  
By fragrant laurel o'ercanopied, where 'twixt enamel'd banks  
Bountiful Eridanus glides throu' their bosky retirement.  
Here were men who bled for honour, their country defend-  
ing; 660

Priests, whose lives wer' a flame of chastity on God's altar;  
Holy poets, content to await their crown of Apollo;  
Discoverers, whose labour had aided life or ennobled;  
Or who fair memories had left through kindly deserving.  
On their brow a fillet pearl-white distinguisheth all these:  
Whom the Sibyl, for they drew round, in question accosted,  
And most Musæus, who tower'd noble among them,  
Center of all that sea of bright faces looking upward.  
'Tell, happy souls, and thou poet and high mystic illustrious,  
Where dwelleth Anchises? what home hath he? for 'tis in  
his quest 670



## Poems in

We hither have made journey across Hell's watery marches.'

Thertó with brief parley rejoin'd that mystic of old-time.  
'In no certain abode we-remain : by turn the forest glade  
Haunt-we, liliated stream-bank, sunny mead ; and o'er valley  
and rock

At will rove-we: but if ye aright your purpose arede me,  
Mount-ye the hill: myself will prove how easy the pathway.'  
Speaking he léd: and come to the upland, sheweth a fair  
plain

Gleaming aneath; and they, with grateful adieu, the descent  
made.

Now Lord Anchises was down i' the green valley musing,  
Where the spirits confin'd that await mortal resurrection 680  
While diligently he-mark'd, his thought had turn'd to his  
own kin,

Whose numbers he-reckon'd, an' of all their progeny foretold  
Their fate and fortune, their ripen'd temper an' action.

He then, when he' espied Æneas t'ward him approaching  
O'er the meadow, both hands uprais'd and ran to receive him,  
Tears in his eyes, while thus his voice in high passion outbrake.  
'Ah, thou'rt come, thou'rt come! at length thy dearly  
belov'd grace

Conquering all hath won-thee the way. 'Tis allow'd to  
behold thee,

O my son,—yea again the familiar raptur' of our speech.  
Nay, I look't for 't thus, counting patiently the moments, 690  
And ever expected ; nor did fond fancy betray me.

From what lands, my son, from what life-dangering ocean  
Art-thou arrived? full mighty perils thy path hav' opposèd:  
And how nearly the dark Libyan thy destiny o'erthrew !'

Then 'he, 'Thy spirit, O my sire, 'twas thy spirit often  
Sadly appearing aroused-me to seek thy fair habitation.  
My fleet moors i' the blue Tyrrhene : all with-me goeth well.  
Grant-me to touch thy hand as of old, and thy body embrace.'  
Speaking, awhile in tears his feeling mutinied, and when  
For the longing contact of mortal affection, he out-held 700



## *Classical Prosody*

His strong arms, the figure sustain'd them not: 'twas as  
empty

E'en as a windworn cloud, or a phantom of irrelevant sleep.

On the level bosom of this vale more thickly the tall trees  
Grow, an' aneath quivering poplars and whispering alders  
Lethe's dreamy river throu' peaceful scenery windeth.

Whereby now flitted in vast swarms many people of all lands,  
As when in early summer 'honey-bees on a flowery pasture  
Pill the blossoms, hurrying to' an' fro,—innumerable are they,  
Revisiting the ravish'd lily cups, while all the meadow hums.

Æneas was turn'd to the sight, and marvelling inquired, 710  
'Say, sir, what the river that there i' the vale-bottom I see?  
And who they that thickly along its bank have assembled?'

Then Lord Anchises, 'The spirits for whom a second life  
And body are destined ar' arriving thirsty to Lethe,  
And here drink th' unmindful draught from wells of oblivyon.  
My heart greatly desired of this very thing to acquaint thee,  
Yea, and show thee the men to-be-born, our glory her'after,  
So to gladden thine heart where now thy voyaging endeth.'

'Must it then be-believ'd, my sire, that a soul which attaineth  
Elysium will again submit to her old body-burden? 720

Is this well? what hap can awake such dire longing in them?'

'I will tell thee', O son, nor keep thy wonder awaiting,'

Answereth Anchises, and all expoundeth in order.

'Know first that the heavens, and th' Earth, and space fluid  
or void,

Night's pallid orb, day's Sun, and all his starry coævals,  
Are by one spirit inly quickened, and, mingling in each part,  
Mind informs the matter, nature's complexity ruling.

Thence the living creatures, man, brute, and ev'ry feather'd  
fowl,

And what breedeth in Ocean aneath her surface of argent :  
Their seed knoweth a fiery vigour, 'tis of airy divine birth, 730  
In so far as unimpeded by an alien evil,

Nor dull'd by the body's framework condemn'd to corruption.  
Hence the desires and vain tremblings that assail them, unable

## *Poems in Classical Prosody*

Darkly prison'd to arise to celestial exaltation ;  
Nor when death summoneth them anon earth-life to  
    relinquish,  
Can they in all discard their stain, nor wholly away with  
Mortality's plaguespots. It must be that, O, many wild graffs  
Deeply at 'heart engrain'd have rooted strangely upon them :  
Wherefore must suffering purge them, yea, Justice atone them  
With penalties heavy as their guilt : some purify exposed 740  
Hung to the viewless winds, or others long watery searchings  
Low i' the deep wash clean, some bathe in fiêry renewal :  
Each cometh unto his own retribution,—if after in ample  
Elysium we attain, but a few, to the fair Happy Woodland,  
Yet slow time still worketh on us to remove the defilement,  
Till it hath eaten away the acquir'd dross, leaving again free  
That first fiêry vigour, the celestiâl virtue of our life.  
All whom here thou sêest, hav' accomplished purification :  
Unto the stream of Lethe a god their company calleth,  
That forgetful of old failure, pain & disappointment, 750  
They may again into' earthly bodies with glad courage enter.'

\* \* \* \* \*

Twín be the gates o' the house of sleep : as fable opineth 893  
One is of horn, and thence for a true dream outlet is easy:  
Fair the other, shining perfected of ivory carven ;  
But false are the visions that thereby find passage upward.  
Soon then as Anchises had spok'n, he-led the Sibyl forth  
And his son, and both dismisst from th' ivory portal.

FINIS

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